

# ocean

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FAIRLINE 58 TARGA GT  
BLACK PEARL  
SWAN 80

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LUXURY WRISTWATCH

# VIRTUAL REALITY

BLACK PEARL TAKES VIRTUAL SHIPYARD  
BUILDS TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

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AUSTRALIA'S CAMPAIGN FOR  
THE AMERICA'S CUP HOTS UP

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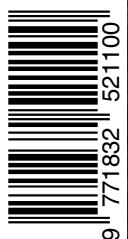
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# BLACK MAGIC

BUILT USING A 'VIRTUAL SHIPYARD' COMPRISING SOME 120 INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS, *BLACK PEARL* IS AS BEAUTIFUL AND TOUGH AS THE GEM SHE'S NAMED AFTER. JOHN JULIAN DISCOVERS A YACHT OF CLASS, CHARACTER AND CAPABILITY.



CHRIS LEWIS / BLACK PEARL



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When it comes to good boat design there is no substitute for sea time, and *Black Pearl* was clearly born of experience. Her owners are seasoned sailors who enjoy remote destinations, and following several years cruising onboard their big sloop they decided to build a motor vessel, or more specifically an expedition yacht with room for a larger tender as well as water toys and fishing, surfing and scuba gear.

Their Captain, Paul Sewell, and his wife Linda had previously commissioned and operated *Northern Light*, a much-admired 20-metre, long-range expedition yacht of classic style, for a former Commodore of the New York Yacht Club. This vessel had been designed by Chuck Paine and built in New Zealand by John Vitali to withstand the toughest conditions, and the Sewells had taken her through some hideous seas and trusted her implicitly, as they did the man who made her. So using *Northern Light* as a template for a larger vessel, the owners and project team set to work choosing a builder.

Several yards were considered in regions as far afield as China, the United States and Turkey. Currency considerations, and some difficulty finding project managers with the relevant language skills who could live close to the yacht during the course of construction, eliminated most of the candidates, although the bid from Turkey was competitive enough to warrant a visit. Australia was deemed too expensive.

Finally in early 2007, encouraged by Vitali and Bjorklund, the owners decided to take the 'virtual shipyard' route – using multiple independent contractors to build various parts of the boat and doing away with the need for a single yard. The project team was strongly in favour.

"The books are open, the doors are open, everything's on the table and we're all on the same team working for the owners," said Vitali. "One of Lars' and my philosophies is that boating is meant to be fun, and if your builder's going to turn you off if you're never going to enjoy it. We lease shed facilities and we have no extra costs. We are on a fixed fee and when that is set, everything else is for the benefit of the boat; we're not going to put in the cheapest pump because we get to keep another \$100."

Craig Loomes and his partners at LOMOcean Design

in Auckland were chosen as naval architects, Carl Ferguson's team at Profab Central Engineering in Palmerston North were picked as builders, Chris Connell in Melbourne was appointed interior designer. Oceania Marine of Whangarei was contracted to paint the vessel, and Specialist Marine Interiors (SMI), also based in Whangarei, were brought in to build, install and finish the complete interior. In all more than 120 contractors were employed to build *Black Pearl*, but the project came together as if they'd been work colleagues for years.

"*Black Pearl* was one of those projects where you think, this is why I do what I do," commented Grant Willis, CEO of SMI. "In the virtual shipyard when you have good project managers like John and Lars, a very hands-on skipper and owners who have such vision and support for an entire team that's all facing the same way, you can't help but get a good result."

Seen from shore, *Black Pearl* is an exercise in classy understatement. Her handsome hull looks purposeful and her sleek white superstructure is elegant and conservative, with shaded side decks and big windows to allow plenty of light within. The six-metre, jet-driven Explorer tender and the two Yamaha jet skis sitting between the Viking life rafts aft of the flybridge do not detract from *Black Pearl's* attractive lines. Adding to her allure is the dark hue of her hull, which changes subtly with the light like the scales of a billfish while underway yet, fascinatingly, reverts to the colour of cool gunmetal at rest.

Having boarded via the swim platform (or passerelle, if stern-to) twin six-step stairways to port and starboard lead to the main deck aft. Here it becomes immediately apparent that the owners



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01 *Black Pearl's* main saloon shows off the Chris Connell / SMI interior to the full, complete with custom made chairs.

02 The galley offers the space, style and equipment of the most luxurious domestic kitchens.

03 A unique Eco-Silk wood finish allows timbers to be laid with opposing grains, to stunning effect.

04 Sunlight sets off the pearlescent hull finish, which changes from polished black to metallic grey.

CHRIS LEWIS / BLACK PEARL



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01 Recessed, back-lit handrails transform stairways into eye-catching design features.

02 Attention to detail and quality of finish is evident everywhere aboard *Black Pearl*.

03 The spacious dressing room and private study area in the owner's suite is a sanctuary of quiet.

04 Pale timbers and clean white surfaces make the owner's bathroom a haven of space and light.

05 Neutral tones abound in the spacious owner's suite, where custom-built cabinetry provides masses of storage.

06 Entertainment for all in the four-berth guest cabin forward.

07 The ship's bell on *Black Pearl's* bow was a traditional maritime touch specified in the owner's brief.

CHRIS LEWIS / BLACK PEARL

like fishing: not only have the corners of the upper deck been radiused to accommodate rods but there is everything you need to catch, clean, cook and serve whatever the ocean has to offer. All the equipment can be quickly accessed from the lazarette below, along with diving, surfing and other sporting kit, and tidied away out of site before guests arrive for drinks and dinner.

The aftermost wings of *Black Pearl's* superstructure curve inwards, which as well as being an attractive feature serves to accommodate a day head to port and the stairway up to the flybridge deck to starboard. Within the saloon there is a working area to starboard for guest use (the owners have an office adjacent to their stateroom), a card table and chairs to port and a lengthy, L-shaped settee. The latter separates this area from the forward section of the saloon on this side, with two tables inboard for coffee or drinks (the main dining area is situated in the enclosed flybridge above). Located on the forward bulkhead is a substantial home theatre system, along with one of the artworks specially commissioned for *Black Pearl*. There are two more easy chairs and a table to starboard and the yacht's 7.8-metre beam allows the entire guest complement of 10 to relax here at any one time.

"I tried to minimise everything as much as possible in order to maximise the illusion of space and the feeling of calm and relaxation," says interior designer Chris Connell. "Someone mentioned the other day that there's not much colour, but you don't really need it because you're looking out at an ever-changing environment, be it



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"BLACK PEARL WAS ONE OF THOSE PROJECTS WHERE YOU THINK, THIS IS WHY I DO WHAT I DO."

GRANT WILLIS, CEO, SPECIALIST MARINE INTERIORS



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01 The view aft from the bow, showing generous deck lounges and the Portuguese bridge.

02 The 'wraparound' wings of the aft superstructure enclose stairways to the flybridge deck.

03 A serious yacht needs serious winches: *Black Pearl* gets twin Maxwell 6000s forward.

04 Wide side decks and sturdy grab rails in all the right places make moving around topside safe while underway.

05 The bridge deck and helmstation, with instruments custom specified by the captain, strike the ideal balance between comfort and practicality.

the sea, islands or the port you've just left."

Connell adds that he was delighted with SMI's translation of his design, and you can see why. The excellent Eco-Silk wood finish, for instance, is achieved by rolling and stripping poplar logs; the process gives the grain a consistent appearance when applied uniformly to a horizontal or vertical surface, but can also be laid crosswise or diagonally for contrast and variety.

*Black Pearl* is full of intriguing spaces and design features. Particularly notable are her stairways, with their curving, backlit, and recessed handrails. The galley is bright with orange vertical surfaces, custom cabinetry and a modern inventory of equipment. There is a service lift up to the flybridge and a capacious pantry across the lobby to starboard. Another curling stairway takes you to the crew accommodation below, enabling the four crewmembers to move around without disturbing guests.

A look around the wheelhouse confirms the impression that *Black Pearl* is one very well appointed yacht. Four 19-inch Hatteland screens take centre stage, and the stainless steel ship's wheel is bracketed by throttle and thruster controls, Furuno NAVnet 3D and NAVpilot 500 equipment and a Caterpillar instrument complex. Further to starboard there's an AutoAnchor chain counter, windlass controller and the gauges and buttons for the TRAC digital stabilisers. Sewell's input was instrumental in specifying the controls and layout for the helmstation where he'd be working.

"We got NavStation in and I outlined what we wanted," he says. "Coming from a commercial



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**A LOOK AROUND THE WHEELHOUSE CONFIRMS THE IMPRESSION THAT *BLACK PEARL* IS ONE VERY WELL APPOINTED YACHT.**

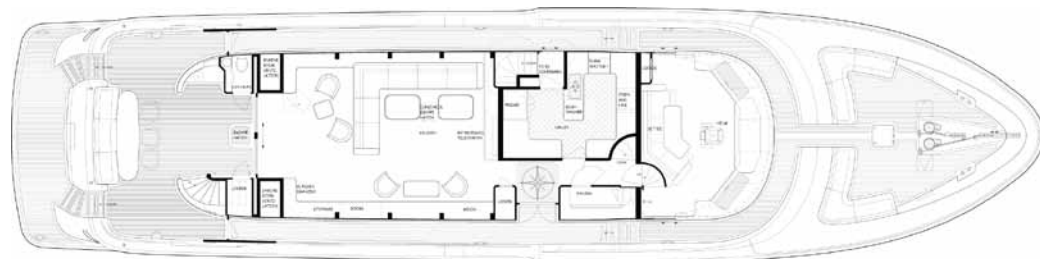
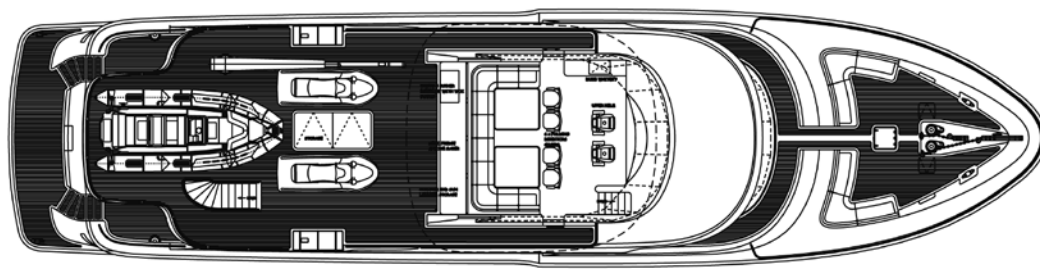


SMI is proud to have manufactured and installed a world class interior into a world class Super yacht... built and installed in New Zealand. Congratulations to the Diverse Projects and Black Pearl Team.

**Specialist Marine Interiors**

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BUILDER	Diverse Projects
COUNTRY OF BUILD	New Zealand
DESIGNER	Craig Loomes / LOMOcean
INTERIOR DESIGNER	Chris Connell
YEAR OF BUILD	2011
LOA	31.5 m / 103 ft
BEAM	7.80 m / 25 ft
DRAFT	2.05 m / 6.7 ft
DISPLACEMENT	166 tons (heavy)
HULL	Marine grade aluminium plate
ENGINE	2 x Caterpillar C18 ACERT
OUTPUT	600hp
PROPELLERS	Veems 5-blade fixed pitch
SPEED (CRUISE)	12 knots
SPEED (MAX)	14 knots
FUEL CAPACITY	28,000 litres
WATER CAPACITY	6,000 litres
BOW THRUSTERS	Trac 65hp
GENERATORS (MAIN)	2 x Caterpillar 51kW
NAVIGATION SYSTEM	Furuno NAVtex
OWNER & GUEST BERTHS	10
CREW	7
CLASSIFICATION	Germanischer Lloyd 100A5
TENDERS	6-metre diesel with jet drive
CHARTER AGENT	Diverse Projects

background, I asked for a FAR-2127BB radar set, full ARPA, 25-kilowatt analogue, and that doesn't talk to anything else. It has its own GPS and it's sending a heading to autopilot so if all the other stuff goes down, I've got that and I've got my paper charts. I want digital radar because the technology is really amazing now, and a chart plotter. We came up with a great Furuno package and reduced the number of screens as far as possible."

The owners like guests to be involved and there's a duplicate range of controls on the flybridge, with two Recaro seats so visitors to the bridge can get a feel for the ship underway. *Black Pearl* has a Portuguese bridge, with access to both the side decks amidships and aft, and to the foredeck. Forward through the raked wheelhouse windows (all forward facing glass on *Black Pearl* has been custom made by DuraShield to withstand 12-metre waves, or 16 tons of force) you can see two rugged Maxwell 6000 anchor winches and beyond them the ship's bell, a historical touch in keeping with *Black Pearl's* modern-classic aura.

Up on the flybridge, as in other parts of the accommodation, there is oak underfoot, complementing the traditional teak decks outside. Because the big tender and jet skis live on the long deck aft, the flybridge is far enough forward to ensure that the sounds of St Tropez on a summer's evening remain muted. However, if you want the atmosphere of the Quai Jean Jaures or the plangent call of a steel band at the Admiral's Inn on a balmy night in English Harbour, then you can leave the big aft windows open and soak it up. And if the tenders are in the water you can dance under the stars, either to the local beat or to music from *Black Pearl's* own selection, played through the speakers outside.

Sooner or later you will make your way down those stylish stairways with their illuminated treads and handrails towards the guest accommodation below. There is a comfortable cabin with four bunks forward, which benefits from an adjacent shower and separate head. Further aft, there is a convertible double cabin to either side, each with its own bathroom, and the owners' full-width stateroom is situated amidships, again with roomy bathing facilities, a walk-in wardrobe and that office area on the starboard side aft. Again, a feeling of comfort and quality prevails, with predominantly white surfaces and attractive Eco-Silk furniture.

Aft of the owners' suite is the crew quarters, and the first cabin you encounter is the single to port, which can serve as accommodation for a pilot or temporary crewmember. The Sewells occupy the starboard-hand double further down the companionway, and opposite that is another crew cabin which is home to the first mate and cook. Both have adjoining heads and showers and a good measure of wardrobe and locker space, and are finished in the same high-quality, low-key style used throughout the yacht. You can leave the crew quarters through the guest accommodation, via the stairway up to the galley, or through the engine room and the lazarette. If you choose the latter, you can admire the very tidy powerhouse of the vessel, with its twin Caterpillar C18 ACERT main engines, two Caterpillar 51-kilowatt generators.

The 600-horsepower CATs spin two Veems NiBral five-bladed, fixed-pitch propellers via a pair of ZF 2150A gearboxes and 4.25-inch shafts while the auxiliaries support a full-time AC system and hydraulic applications that include the crane, bow and stern thrusters and the zero-speed TRAC stabilisers. Extensive back-up precautions allied to very high spec machinery means that *Black Pearl* should enjoy the best of conditions and weather the worst. One thing that has moved up the list of priorities onboard modern expedition yachts is fuel efficiency, and *Black Pearl's* burn numbers are 40 per cent below those of comparable vessels.

Wherever you leave *Black Pearl*, it will be with a wistful, backward glance and a treasure chest of happy memories. Whether your parting glimpse of her is in a Caribbean bay in company with other yachts or within a Pacific Island reef on her own, she will look distinguished rather than conspicuous, purposeful rather than busy and ageless rather than fashionable. She was inspired by a dream and her shipyard may be virtual, but *Black Pearl* is very much a reality. ○

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