

# inside

interior design review

## IDEA Awards 2017 Shortlisted projects and objects

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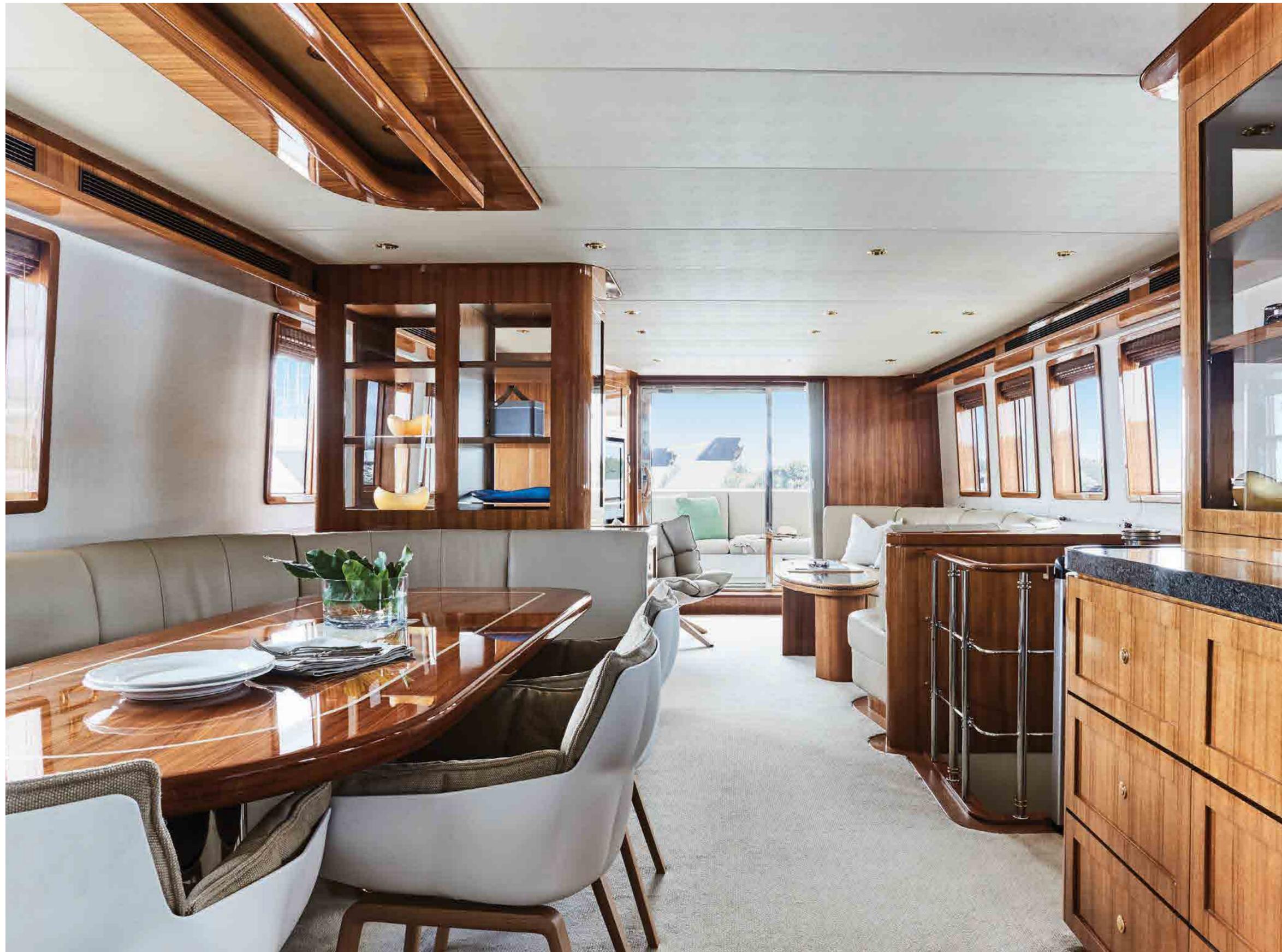
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# Sailing in style



Leaving dry land for a moment, *inside* co-editor Jan Henderson visits the latest project from Nexus Designs and steps on board the Robert Bruce for a tour of a boat with an interior design that is making waves in spectacular style.



Nexus Designs has been at the forefront of interior design in Australia for five decades and this year the practice celebrates its 50th anniversary. With thousands of completed commissions under its belt, this illustrious practice founded by Janne Faulkner in 1967 has another stellar project to add to the list, and not just any project but a 100-foot boat, the Robert Bruce. Nexus creative director, Sonia Simpfendorfer, and associate and senior interior designer, Lucy Marczyk, have made rather a speciality of designing the interiors of unusual projects - think of the ferry, MV Sorrento and the Rolls-Royce showroom in Melbourne - and have now turned their design prowess to recreating a modern seafaring home that ticks all the boxes in luxurious, contemporary interior design.

The client approached Nexus with a brief to renovate the main entertaining deck of their boat where substantial flood damage had occurred from leaking refrigeration units. The initial concept was to update and refurbish the saloon and dining areas, captain's bridge and wheelhouse office and the skylounge on the level above. As the project progressed, however, the brief expanded to include the kitchen/galley area. With much work to be accomplished, the boat was sailed to the Gold Coast City Marina, in Queensland, where the laborious work of repairing and remaking was to be completed by boat-skilled craftsmen. The Robert Bruce was designed by Tom Fexas and built in Hong Kong at the Cheoy Lee shipyards in 2011 and now, some six years later, the interior aesthetic required updating. The new interior was to provide a comfortable family environment, but also a more relaxed place to gather and enjoy fishing excursions. With careful planning, a refined colour palette and complementary furnishings and materials, lead designer for the project Lucy Marczyk has created a new design vision for the Robert Bruce and realised all the needs of her client.

The Robert Bruce is substantial, sleeping 10 guests, plus a crew of three. There are three basic levels in the layout of the interior that are accessed by a staircase to the side of the boat. On the lower deck are the VIP and master staterooms, two cabins, and crew and captain's quarters. The middle deck encompasses the bar, saloon, dining, kitchen and galley areas, the pilot and wheelhouse office, with the bridge deck and skylounge situated on the uppermost level. The sleeping quarters were essentially undamaged by the floodwaters and so received a cosmetic makeover, with new fittings in the bathrooms and updated linen for beds. The real work was required in the living areas, however, where floors and ceilings were renewed, wallpaper applied throughout and furniture replaced.

Specifying furnishings and fittings for a seafaring vessel is a little different to a residence on land. There are requirements such as meeting fire retardant specifications, making sure that objects are safely fixed with no room to move when seas are choppy, and addressing the colour fade from strong sunlight and durability from the particular wear-and-tear of life at sea. Marczyk has taken all these challenges into account and succeeded in presenting a design that resonates. Throughout the

**opener**—The skylounge is the place to catch the sun and relax. **previous**—The interior of the saloon and dining areas feature Piano gloss finish on timber including the dining table



The interior of the Robert Bruce is appropriate and classic, modern but not intimidating.

interior there is a subdued colour palette of white, mid-brown and beige with accents of green that complement the interior architecture of the boat.

In the bar and saloon Husk dining chairs ('15 chair, B&B Italia, Space) and armchair (B&B Italia, Space) sit comfortably beside the teak cabinetry. Patricia Urquiola's beautiful chairs were chosen not only for their comfort and usability (the covers are replaceable), but also for the visual aesthetic - as the design imitates a boat hull, the outer shell of the chair holding the upholstered interior. The floor is carpeted (Marilyn, colour stockings, Fabrica), the ceiling has been covered with vinyl (Pellan Ultimate, colour Mondo) and Maharam vinyl wallpaper (Aura) adds texture to the walls. The original teak cabinetry has been revamped and, where required, replaced and all the woodwork shines with a Piano, high-gloss two-pac finish. This includes the dining table with a mother-of-pearl strip inlay that is an outstanding example of fine workmanship, where old meets new. The existing banquette was hard-edged and is now soft and comfortable for adults and children alike. The galley was extended with new benchtops (Corian, colour Bisque), Maharam wallpaper and a timber floor has been laid in this area (Da Vinci, colour Lorenzo warm oak, Karndean).

New kitchen cabinets have been installed and an intimate dining area has been completed with loose furniture to form the breakfast and casual

meals area. Within the captain's wheelhouse office, timberwork has also been restored and a sofa bed (Bole, Jordan) and Kartell chair complete the furnishings. As the interior aesthetic is relaxed but precisely curated, so too are the very important accessories that have been incorporated into the design. They include a bespoke polished teak wine holder or caddy for the centre of the dining table and the Dinosaur Design resin objects, bowls and plates, to be used for meals or as *objets* in cabinets.

The skylounge is the place to be - to relax in the sun and enjoy the vista of water and land. The fixed furnishings, banquette structure, table, barstools and stackable chairs in this area are finished in white, but the addition of beige cushioning (Rove, colour Soba, Maharam) lifts the vignette to that of restrained sophistication. Here too, the details complete the offering with the inclusion of Mario Luca Giusti's green glassware and bowls, and Strahl crystal-look-alike glasses that ensure there is no broken glass underfoot in a rough sea.

The interior of the Robert Bruce is appropriate and classic, modern but not intimidating. The aesthetic is correct and feels as if it belongs, with not a blue stripe in sight. Marczyk's interior design for this project is all that it should be with comfort and style at the nucleus of the endeavour. With a renewed life ahead, the Robert Bruce can now set sail with all the amenity of home and a grand interior that sets the speed.

**above**—Patricia Urquiola's Husk chair range has been utilised within the dining area and as a lounge chair in the saloon. **right**—The kitchen has been renewed and features new Corian benchtops

