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DUBAI INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW



The yacht, for a lucky few, is an extension of the family home. When aboard, people like to have the same luxuries and amenities they have ashore. Careful planning of a yacht's galley (kitchen) and head (bathroom) is required to meet a client's needs.

Kitchen and bathroom design for yachts is a very exciting industry, where a vast amount of money is spent on creating luxury spaces for entertainment. "Designing boats for your own enjoyment is the ultimate luxury," says Campion Platt, architect and designer. "Each owner lives differently and has different needs."

In general, however, boat kitchens are open spaces, whereas bathrooms have more land-based upgrade features, such as saunas and steam units. Some may also have tanning booths in order to avoid direct sun. The two main trends are industrial-looking kitchens and decorative kitchens. Boats are no longer just a mode of transport. They are also now made for living."

When designing a galley and head, many choose to employ the help of an interior designer. In general, for luxury yachts each cabin has its own en-suite head and one day head (powder room). On multi-decks there are more powder rooms, covered outdoor shower areas and on-deck Jacuzzis.

There are a number of considerations that need to be made when in the initial stages of planning.

"When designing the interiors of a boat, space constraints make it a challenge to design it in a smart and efficient way in order to utilise all corners of a particular cabin," says Lea Badro, Business Development, Greenline Yacht Interiors.

"Practicality is key when designing interiors, due to it being a moving vessel and not land based. You also have regulations and rules to adhere to that limit design capacity. For example, fire-retardant doors, cabinets that need to be closed securely, furniture that is locked in place and panels that need to be easily removed for trouble-free access into the adjoining cabin."

The function each space will serve is the first thing client and designer will look at. "For the kitchen, we need to consider if we have several satellite kitchens throughout the boat," says Natalia Smith, Interior Designer, Idée Design.

"You also need to consider what functions the kitchen will serve — is it for entertaining, cooking or presentations? When it comes to the bathrooms, a similar logic applies. How many people are going to be on board? To decide whether it needs to be a powder room, shower or full bathroom you need to check what rooms are adjacent."

Even the largest yachts have space limitations, so it's imperative to make sure that what is available is used to the best advantage. "The main trick is to use all corners of the room. Most kitchens don't utilise the corner cabinets well or at all," says Platt. "Overhead and under-seat cabinets give premium storage space."

Built-in cabinets are required because of the problem of loose furniture moving due to the waves. Built-in banquettes are found everywhere because they provide storage, take up less space and can also be converted for sleeping."

When planning kitchens for luxury yachts, designers seek to recreate spaces that are functional with appliances that have 'wow' factor.

"Luxury is not as much about what you have but how you experience it. Small additions in the form of luxury appliances can take someone's experience to the next level," says Smith. "There is a wide range of appliances that many choose for their yachts. Built-in cappuccino makers are popular, while a warming drawer for cups and plates adds an extra touch of luxury.

Wine cooler storage systems are another option, while integrated cooking modules for different types of cooking can be chosen to fit in with the client's lifestyle." When it comes to flooring, the only limitation is the client's imagination.

"All kinds of materials and finishes can be applied to the interiors of a yacht, the only difference from materials of land-based projects is the way you apply them in an yacht interior," says Badro. "Due to marine regulations and weight considerations, lightweight factors are extremely important on a yacht. If certain materials, such as marble or granite, wish to be used the slab must be cut into a very thin sheet, which is then applied to a special lightweight panelling called aluminium honeycomb."

"I recommend cork and laminate for galleys, and marble, granite and stone in the bathrooms," says Platt. "Some high-end yachts will also employ varnished teak and holly flooring in salons and bathrooms as well. Non-slip surfaces such as 'honed' stone work well. Polished marble is too slippery as a floor material," says Platt.

"Historically, the beautiful old ships just used wood, mostly teak or holly and many boats continue this design method today."

Kitchen surfaces also come in all forms. "I think for high-end boats, there is no limitation. Granite or marble can be used. There is no one specific material that is best for boats, however, if clients are serious cooks, I would suggest a butcher's block, and a solid glass countertop," says Smith.

Looking to the future, concerns over the state of the environment mean more 'green' technology is being developed. "Wind and solar power will be used more in diesel boats in the future," says Platt.

"With advances in technology, bathrooms will become more automated and user friendly. Kohler, for instance, has come out with bath 'environments', where one can custom-tailor the shower/ sauna/steam experience by dialling up personal control features."