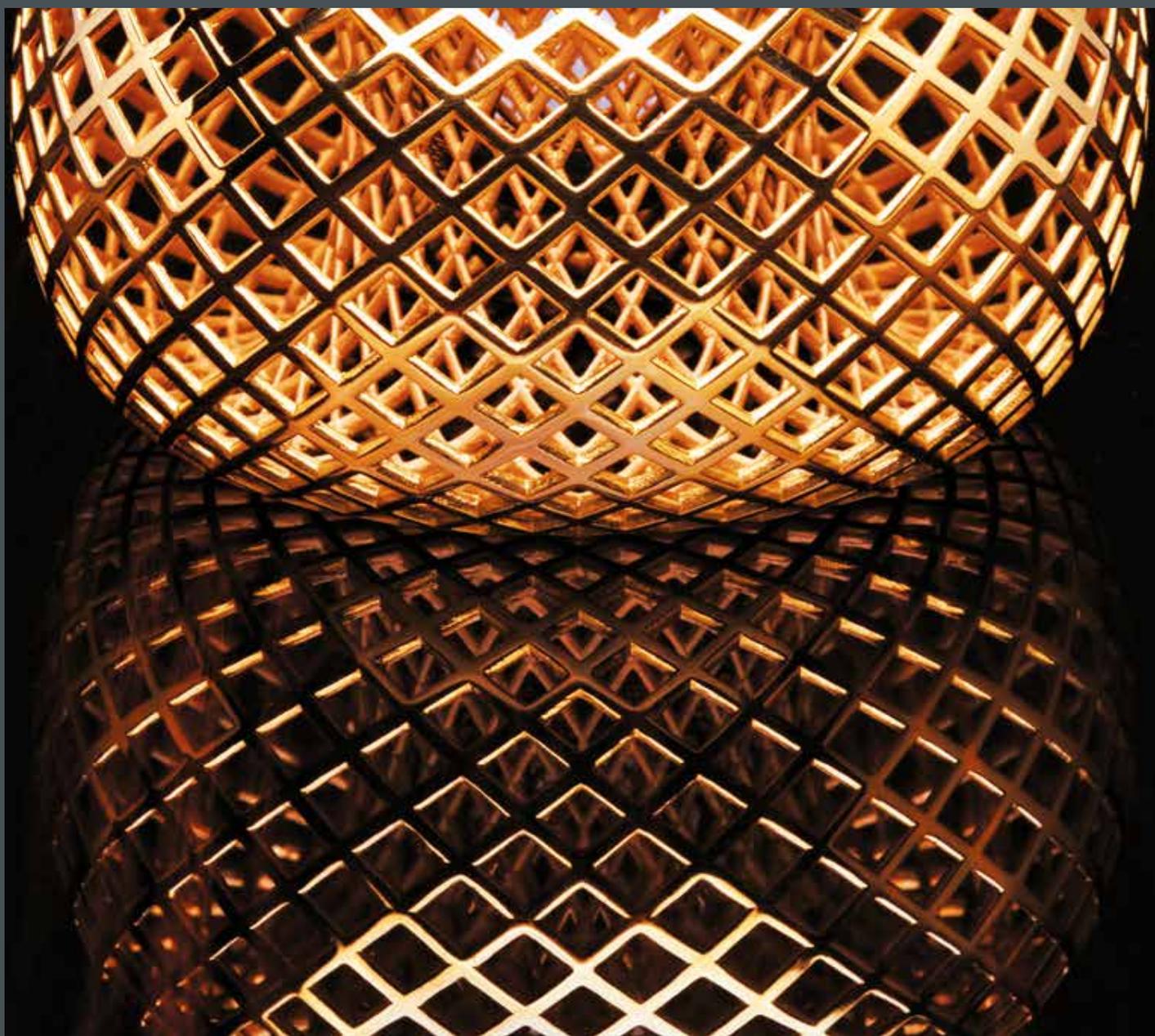


Q22 2015

Superyacht

INTERIOR DESIGN EXTERIOR SPACE CREATIVITY AND ARCHITECTURE



DESIGN

CASE STUDY

Evan K Marshall reflects on his career and the development of American design.

Page 8

ARTISAN

A look at Spanish glassblower Gordiola as it approaches its 300th anniversary.

Page 18

IN BUILD

We explore Eidsgaard Design's 67m motoryacht in build at Feadship.

Page 34

TOP YACHT

Sailing on board 47.6m *Wisp* together with Jonathan Rhoades and Andre Hoek.

Page 44

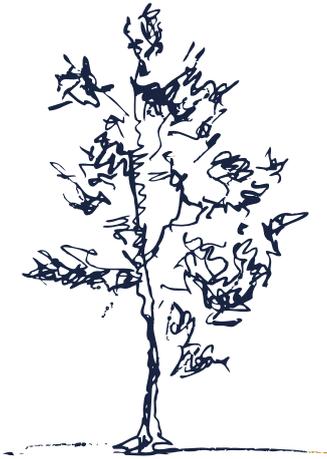
**DOMUS
DESIGN**

RODRIGUEZ
DESIGN

ANJA WIPPICH



**THE
ART
OF**



The interior on Lürssen's 85m *Solandge*, with its outstanding golden Tree of Life feature, was the product of empathic design created by Aileen Rodriguez and was an approach first exercised on the owners' homes.

LISTENING





Prior to delving into the design of a lifetime with *Solandge*, Aileen Rodriguez worked on the owners' homes in America and England, a relationship that began in 2007. The couple were introduced to Rodriguez Design through a friend who commissioned the studio to do a yacht refit project in Florida.

"The owners interviewed several local designers, and I was one of them," recalls Rodriguez, who had previously worked for Patrick Knowles for 10 years. "Although they have properties elsewhere in the world and are primarily based in the UK, they felt the process would be easier and quicker if the designer was based near the property.

"With the house in America, we had a timeframe of about three months to do the work because they wanted it ready for Christmas 2008. I met them and immediately we had good chemistry. They liked the materials and soft textures and palettes I had shown them. I listened to what they said, and we quickly became very comfortable with the California-style direction for the house—breezy and comfortable."

As the relationship between clients and designer grew, so did the portfolio of projects. Rodriguez was invited to help to refresh the exterior living spaces on their existing yacht before plans for a new project that would become *Solandge* were shared. "We were just kicking around ideas for fun at that point," she says.

By February 2010, Rodriguez was in London to meet the owners to discuss ideas for the yacht's interior. The discussions soon evolved to encompass creative solutions for the renovation of their London home. For Rodriguez, the relationship between the owners, their yachts and homes all came down to a natural, deep understanding of their feelings and sensibilities.

Rodriguez never lost sight of their ultimate goals and happiness.

"On *Solandge*, every material, wood type, moulding, colour, light fixture and floor medallion is my interpretation of the couple and what I know about them; the complete design is that story. I found and incorporated their favourite materials: dumorite in his bathroom and pink quartz in hers; we also

"With the house in America, we had a timeframe of about three months to do the work because they wanted it ready for Christmas 2008."

"It's like they welcomed me into their family," she says with a smile. "They trusted me with their emotions and they needed someone to listen to them and do what they wanted, to make their vision and dream come true."

As the London project proceeded, Rodriguez's involvement in it grew as the owners came to trust her vision. It seemed natural to draw her into designs for *Solandge*, and eventually she was asked to take on the role as lead interior designer of the project. It was a nervous time for Rodriguez and the shipyard which had not worked with her before. But the owners were adamant and, to her enormous credit,

used honey onyx and mother-of-pearl. I married the materials together throughout the yacht in ways that represent them and their lives."

The large medallion in the space that divides the master his and hers en suite brings all of these elements together. However, Rodriguez faced a new challenge with *Solandge* as the project had to be a complete surprise. "I'd already done homes for them, so I had to show them something they'd never seen before," she says. "This is true of all clients, especially high-level clients: they want something new and special and fresh. That's where the recycled glass in the bathrooms came from." ▶



THE RESIDENCE IN FISHER ISLAND



COURTESY OF RODRIGUEZ DESIGN

**“Approaching
the yacht at
night, a glowing
golden tree is
clearly visible
through the
windows,
spanning the
height
of the vessel.”**





JIM RAYCROFT

Rodriguez had sourced a translucent-coloured glass product that, when backlit, glows like luminescent marble. She deployed it in the owners' and guests' bathrooms, as the surrounding surfaces for sinks and bathtubs, to remarkable effect.

The designer dedicates a lot of her time and that of her team to researching new materials, artisans and ideas to keep her clients happy. "Research is one of the most important parts of my business," Rodriguez says. "To make something unique, you have to research extensively."

Five key artists were involved in the custom interior styling aboard *Solandge*: Garth Witcoski of Art Network in Fort Lauderdale did the master stateroom columns and work in the main salon and stairwell; Arte Veneziana in Venice handled the master bathrooms; furniture design was by Valentina Giovando of Italy; and the glass walls on the bridge deck for the spa areas were designed and manufactured by Irishman Eoin Turner.

The central design feature of the yacht is the Tree of Life. Early on in the project, the owners told Rodriguez they wanted something to run the entire height of the staircase amidships. "I approached artists in several countries to come up with mock-ups of how they would handle the opportunity to design something for this space," she says. "Nothing was right until we contacted Wired Custom Lighting in California."

Lürssen and Master Yachts—the management team—were cautious about the idea of a 15m tree spanning three decks with illuminated glass flowers hand-blown in Murano, but it went ahead anyway.

The tree is clearly a very complex creation, both artistically and technically. Aside from the engineering design that needed to

meet stringent charter safety standards, and the delicate nature of the gold and glass object, there are the electrics and wiring inside it that power a dazzling array of LED lightbulbs. The end result, however, is utterly remarkable. Approaching the yacht at night, a glowing golden tree is clearly visible through the windows, spanning the height of the vessel.

"I gave a part of my soul to this project: it took a lot of time and energy to find these artists, to work out the correct touches and details that I knew would make the owners happy."

Given the opportunities she's been offered by virtue of her dedication, love of craft and her sensibilities—not to mention her charming manner—there's little doubt that what Rodriguez's success on *Solandge* demonstrates is her ability to observe, listen and digest her clients' wishes. Resonating with their needs, amplifying their vision and curating a finished experience on their behalf was, in the case of *Solandge* and the owners' residences in Florida and London, the only approach that would work.

"I think body language is so important," she says. "No matter where people are from in the world, you can read facial expressions and sense when they're happy or not. I may not speak their native language, but I'm very good at working through a process where I get the right feedback and know how to proceed."

Rodriguez insists on the importance of positivity and exuding passion and enthusiasm for the project to both the clients and the co-builders. "And look at it this way," she says, "for the clients, this is about what, ultimately, they've created. All I've done is make their dreams come true." ■