

Talking design with Francesca Cianficconi

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Francesca Cianficconi is an Italian designer in every sense. A proud Italian and a fervent designer, her love for boats begun at a young age and is translated into every element of her architectural and interior design work on board some of the world's most luxurious superyachts, including the 57 metre Taiba, and for her management throughout the build of the 68.5 metre Lady Anne. Here, we talk with Cianficconi, who tells us a little more about her work, her studio and her unappeasable admiration for all things yachting.

Cianficconi started out in the industry with an opportunity that not every young designer can expect to receive within just a year after graduating; the management of the 68.5 metre Amels superyacht Lady Anne, under the guidance of the yacht's interior and exterior designer, Walter Franchini. This project was Cianficconi's inaugural major project, and one that saw her dealing directly with the often exacting sphere of superyacht owners. She explains a little more about her not-so-humble beginnings, saying, "I started in the yachting industry with Walter Franchini, and I really loved it. I'm really passionate about the sea, about boats, and about everything I do, and Walter trusted me a lot. He was designing Lady Anne when I came into the office, and he started to give me responsibilities. I would go to Makkum [Netherlands] several times per month, following the shipyard, following the carpenters... In the of-

fice, I was the link between Walter and our collaborators, and I would transform his ideas to function on paper. It was a really big experience for me."

Cianficconi spent several years honing both her project management and design skills, and as her expertise grew, so did her ambition. In 2010, she opened her very own Rome based architecture and design studio, Francesca Cianficconi Architetto. The move is representative of her strong desire for success. Going it alone is never an easy feat, particularly in an industry dominated by successful - and predominantly male - peers, but she always knew it was going to be a challenge. "I love challenges," she says. "My life has always developed step-by-step, and it was the moment to take another step forward. I love to see what I can achieve. When I started out, it was always the goal to eventually have my own company. It's one goal reached - let's see how far we will go!"

With considerable notable experience under her belt, it wasn't long before Cianficconi's studio really started taking off. A testament to this, one of her most recent completed superyacht projects is the 57 metre Taiba, launched in 2015 by Palumbo. The steel and aluminum yacht part of the Italian brand's Classic line was one of Cianficconi's most challenging projects to date, she told SYT, and she was tasked with the job of creating a consistent motif present throughout the yacht, but with each room maintaining a distinct, separate style. She says, "Taiba was a challenge. Normally



the project needs to have a unique style, all along the boat from the fly deck to the lower deck. The owner asked to have every room different from the other, so my challenge was to keep these differences, as well as a motif to keep the boat and the style together. I used different woods, different marbles like Brown Magic, Calacatta, custom carpets... The end result is great. The owner is happy and so am I."

The aforementioned distinct lack of female counterparts in the superyacht industry as a whole is

perhaps where some of her ability to exceed even the most challenging owners' expectations originate. As Cianficconi herself says, "I'm a passionate, sensitive Italian woman, and by using this in conjunction with my creativity... it's where I really excel."

The ability to excel and exceed expectations is also probably why Cianficconi is enjoying her busy present, and looking forward to an even busier future. Though the majority of her superyacht projects are, as ever, being kept tightly un-

der wraps, she did tell SYT that right now, she is currently working on a 36 metre vessel featuring a Scandinavian, bright and clean interior, in addition to a 50 metre yacht which will utilise warm materials and colours. Both projects are for a European shipyard. She hinted at some larger projects that are coming up in the future, but, for now at least, we'll just have to wait and see.

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