

DUKE TOWN







With a challenging brief requiring all the characteristics of one of Heesen's earlier builds, yet smaller in size, the yard has created a majestic vessel, as Roger Lean-Vercoe discovers. Photography by Bugsy Gedlek

When a new client approaches a builder with a request for a yacht that shares the looks and features of an earlier vessel from that yard, it is surely a compliment. When the yacht that the client wants is almost ten metres shorter than the yacht he admired, it is certainly a problem to satisfy his demand, but the 36.5 metre motor yacht *Duke Town* is proof that this is not only possible, but it is an interesting exercise in design evolution.

The starting point for *Duke Town's* design was the 45.86 metre *No Escape*, a blue-hulled, semi-displacement yacht, designed by Frank Laupman of Omega Design, that had been launched from Heesen Shipyard in 1999. It was no wonder that the client admired her, for she

is a particularly elegant vessel featuring a high bow that blends seamlessly into a curvaceous superstructure, while her interior packs in two saloons, five guest cabins and a stern garage. In this process of creating *Duke Town*, Laupman carefully pared down *No Escape's* key features, reducing the foredeck length and moving the superstructure forward, a change that was carefully concealed with a high foredeck bulwark so as to preserve the elegant sheerline and give the impression of a longer foredeck.

At the same time, Laupman lowered the height of the pilothouse to create a more smoothly flowing silhouette as it rose from the bows to the sculptured archmast, while the corresponding slope at the yacht's stern was made less steep by reducing the length of the bridge deck aft. With every intervening line



(o n b o a r d >

precisely and sympathetically readjusted, the result became the harmonious whole that is *Duke Town*. Following this exterior styling exercise, the dimensions of the interior compartments were readjusted carefully so that those with a knowledge of both vessels do not feel restricted within the smaller one.

Interestingly, Bram Jongepier, the naval architect in Heesen's in-house Diaship Design

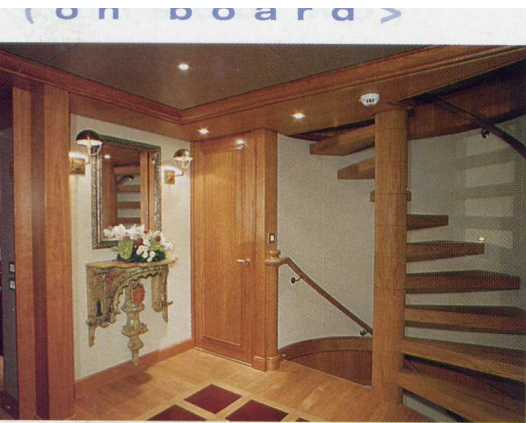
Team, did not adopt the lines of *No Escape* because the shortening exercise had moved the position of the new yachts' centre of gravity further forward. One other significant design difference between the two vessels is that *Duke Town* has been built and certified so that she can be readily equipped to comply with the British MCA regulations for charter vessels. This will preserve her resale value in the future.



Above: the light and spacious upper saloon with its earthy fabrics and relaxed atmosphere

Above right: a fully equipped pilothouse, holds three ergonomically designed seats at the helm

Right: aft of the upper saloon, the large deck area is perfect for alfresco dining



The start point was, therefore, a clean sheet of paper, from which emerged a well-balanced, easily-driven aluminium hull, whose running surfaces warped gently from a fine bow to a relatively flat aft body that is scalloped by two shallow propeller tunnels. The transom opens out and down, powered by hydraulic rams, thus creating a splendid teak-clad bathing platform, forward of which is a garage for the Novamarine 5.2 metre tender, 850cc two-person Yamaha Waverunner and other watersports gear. This very useful feature clears the decks of clutter while the six metre or so of length that it puts between the engines and transom allows an efficiently shallow angle for the propeller shafts. Unusually, the tender and Waverunner are not launched by a crane but pulled seawards by a hydraulic winch via an ingenious system of turning blocks with their keels sliding along a Teflon skid and over

rollers that are temporarily mounted on the bathing platform. They are recovered in the same manner – a fast and easy operation with the added advantage that it avoids the need for a costly and relatively heavy crane. *Duke Town* does have a crane, however, but it is a small one positioned on the sundeck where, in future use under MCA regulations, it will launch a deck-stowed rescue boat. Today it is used to lift a second, smaller Waverunner into its stowage position across the aft of the sundeck.

The garage has enabled *Duke Town* to retain the same spacious deck areas that were a feature of *No Escape*. Aloft, there is a well laid out sundeck with a huge oval dining area, full service bar, spa pool and ample space for seating, while the aft ends of both the bridge and main decks offer further dining and lounging areas that adjoin the yacht's two saloons. While most designers ensure that good use is made of a yacht's aft decks, only a few take the trouble to develop a guest area forward. It is a delightfully private spot to take breakfast when the yacht is stern-to in harbour. Laupman, therefore, made sure that *Duke Town* has a cluster of seating, a table and sunpads built into the sloping superstructure forward of the pilothouse. These four distinct deck areas will certainly ensure that any of *Duke Town's* guests can find some personal open-air space should they wish it.

During the design of a yacht, co-ordination between the designer and the interior designer can be rather blurred. The artistic flair of an



Above right: the relaxing main saloon displays a collection of prints of the town of s'Hertogenbosch – the yacht's namesake
Left: elegant dining for eight is enhanced by food related oil paintings to whet the appetite





interior designer is often expressed in sketches and swatches, rather than in precise drawings, and this can cause problems of scale and fit during the final stages of the vessel's construction. In addition, even the most experienced interior designer will run into problems with marine safety regulations and with awkwardly sized compartments when they first work with yachts.

Duke Town's owner asked the very highly regarded Bert Quadvlieg, famous for his interiors of European castles and villas, to decorate his yacht. Together, an effective method of working developed between the two designers. When Laupman finalised his

prepared his comments and materials in the usual way and returned them directly to Laupman, who incorporated the decoration in a final set of fully inclusive construction drawings that were delivered to the yard. Everything fitted into its designated place and the Heesen joiners were saved the problem of rationalising two different sets of plans.

The resulting interior is splendid. The owner had asked Quadvlieg to create a practical, modern-classic ambience in which he and his family would feel comfortable at all times. Quadvlieg started with a background of cherrywood panelling – part plain and part raised and fielded – that is surmounted by a



on board >



was given its own distinct personality, but, in the manner of a composer, Quadvlieg was careful to ensure that his symphony of decoration was endowed with overall harmony.

The main deck saloon – a gathering place for evenings or during dull weather – has a palette of muted straw, taupe and beige. The furnishings are bold but simple – two rattan chairs and a pair of settees facing each other across a low table in the sitting area aft, while forward, through a narrows created by an antique Venetian chest of drawers flanked by cabinets filled with glassware, the oval-ended Georgian style dining table is overlooked by a splendid gallery of oils on the forward bulkhead, all with a food-related theme. The



other art is eclectic – an Etruscan torso, a pair of 2,000 year old Chinese jade discs whose mystic purpose has been long lost and a modern bronze disc, its pure line inspired by the jade. Most noticeable is the splendid collection of early prints, not just in the saloon but throughout the yacht, that depict the same heavily fortified medieval town. It is the Dutch city of s'Hertogenbosch, the home town of the owner and the key to the yacht's name, as loosely translated it means 'Duke town'.

At the head of the aromatic untreated teak stairway that winds up from the starboard side entrance hall, the upper saloon has quite a different character. Lined on three sides with windows, this bright and cheerful room has been primarily designed for daytime use and is decorated in a sporty style that leans heavily on natural materials from Asia, such as the untreated teak of the walls, the sharkskin Majilite of the deckhead and the crushed bamboo that faces the cupboard doors. A tactile, coarsely woven carpet in a mix of chunky white, beige and black jute, wicker furniture and accessories – a swordfish spear, a nut from a rare coco de mer palm and a polished turtle shell – could all have been gleaned from some sun-washed Indian Ocean beach. For comfort's sake, a settee upholstered in a silky velvet joins the wicker chairs around a low table to provide an ideal viewing spot for the plasma television screen concealed behind the bamboo doors while, further aft, a square, high-low table is available for a breakaway group to take coffee or play cards.

Like *No Escape*, *Duke Town* has five en suite cabins, the owner's forward on the main deck and the remaining four – two twins and two doubles – found at the foot of the yacht's main stairwell, clustered around a hall that is adorned



with a giant clamshell. Despite the scaling down process, all are comfortably sized and elegantly outfitted, with delightful and individual decoration. The owner's bedroom is entered through a dressing room which is fitted with a desk and easy chairs, so it is also a room where the children can occupy themselves with games. The bedroom itself is a classically elegant room with walls clad in a raised damask that is dominated by its aft-facing king-sized bed. To port is a dressing table and fitted drawers, while to starboard a sitting area ensures that the owners have a convenient private retreat. A scattering of antique furniture adds to the homely, eclectic nature of the room. The en suite bathroom, extending aft on the port side, offers a huge shower, bidet, head



Above left: the starboard side twin-bedded guest cabin has striking headboards with a nautical theme
Above and left: the owner's bedroom is a classically elegant room with a magnificent en suite bathroom. The bedroom is entered through a dressing room which doubles as a children's play area

on board >



and a splendid bath set within a delicately toned lava rosa marble surround and filled from a splendid lion's head faucet.

Without doubt, Quadvlieg and Laupman did a fantastic job in creating a modern, relaxing and stylish interior, with the help of high quality construction by Heesen, not only in the yacht's interior, but all material throughout the yacht. The same high standard can be found in the equipment and installation in *Duke Town's* pilothouse, crew areas and technical spaces.

This is particularly apparent in the engine room, where the Diaship Design Team was given the difficult task of accommodating what is, with the exception of slightly smaller engines, almost identical machinery to that installed in *No Escape*, in a significantly smaller compartment. Certainly, this is not a place for a portly engineer, but the layout is flawless and every item of equipment is readily accessible for inspection and maintenance.

Such is the nature of semi-displacement yachts, that the twin 2,285hp MTU diesels are infrequently taken to their full power (which, incidentally, drives *Duke Town* to a respectable 21 knots) so a carbon build up in the lubricating oil is inevitable. In this respect, the engineer's pride and joy is the centrifuge-style oil filtration system, an optional extra from MTU, that is inserted in the system to remove this excess carbon. It keeps the engines in tip-top form and increases the servicing interval from 250 to 500 hours, a worthwhile saving of effort which pays for itself in a very short time.

There is no doubt that *Duke Town* is a little miracle of design – a compact, high quality superyacht with an excellent mix of top calibre accommodation and expansive deck spaces. Just as *Duke Town* was inspired by another yacht, this yacht is surely bound to inspire future clients. □

DUKE TOWN

LOA

36.5m

LWL

30.7m

Beam (max)

7.95m

Draught (max)

2.1m

Displacement (to DWL)

185 tonnes

Propulsion

2 x 2,285hp MTU 12V 396

TE94 diesels

Gearbox

ZF BW465P

Propellers

Shaffran Nibril 4-blade

Shafts

130mm

Speed (max/cruise)

21 knots/16 knots

Fuel capacity

44,100 litres

Range at 12 knots

2,800nm

Electricity generation

2 x 66kW Northern Lights

M668T

Stabilisers

KN 353

Anchors

2 x SHHP Pool-TW 167kg

Bowthruster

Dane 80hp

Watermakers

2 x HEM 3,000lpd

Marble supplier

Stone bv

Sewage treatment

Hamann

Exterior paint

Awlgrip

Air conditioning

Heinen Et Hopman, chilled

water Et fancoils

Navigation eqpt

Furuno (ARPA) radar, Leica

DGPS, B&G Hydra, Transas

Autopilot Et gyrocompass

G Plath Navipilot V HSE

Communication

Seatel 4094E Inmarsat C Et

B, VHF (DSC)

Accommodation

10 guests + 8 crew

Construction

Aluminium hull Et

superstructure

Classification

ABS #A1, AMS;

MCA certified

Interior design

Bert Quadvlieg Et

Frank Laupman

Exterior styling

Omega Design – Frank

Laupman

Naval architecture

Diaship Design Team

Builder/Year

Heesen Shipyards/2002

PO Box 8, 5340 AA Oss,

The Netherlands

Tel:+31 412 665 544

Fax:+31 412 665 566

