

sara oikonomou

GAME OF CHALLENGE

PROUD OF A HIGHLY CREATIVE, ARTISTIC AND NOVEL APPROACH, THE WELL-KNOWN YACHT DESIGNER, WHO VIEWS EACH PROJECT AS A NEW EXCITING CHALLENGE, TALKS TO ONDECK ABOUT HER PROFESSIONAL COURSE IN THE SECTORS OF YACHT BUILDING, ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN.



Her course in the male-dominated sector of yachtbuilding has been dynamic and successful, since her resume includes a series of collaborations with leading yards in Greece and abroad. The vast and endless sea was the main reason why Sara decided to follow the yacht design specialization while studying Architecture in Genoa, Italy.

Right after graduating, she started working in Italy, while some years later she moved to the Netherlands for a new yacht project. Upon her return to Greece, Sara got engaged in numerous yacht projects of various scales which were successfully delivered through the collaboration of different production agents.

What do you find fascinating about yacht design?

Creation is what fascinates me in general, in all of its possible expressions. Having studied architecture in Genoa with a specialisation in yacht building, I clearly have a soft spot for yacht building projects.

If you had to choose between a super yacht and a traditional wooden boat, which project would you choose and why?

Actually, I truly believe that even the super yacht needs to have elements that bring it close to the wider sphere of the traditions of the sea. Immediacy, admiration and respect for the sea remain a common denominator in my work. Then again, a traditional boat demands great care, respect for the story it wishes to tell and some extra help so that this story does not come to an abrupt end.

How difficult is it for a woman to be heard and seen in a male-dominated industry, such as the shipping industry?

The shipping sector is indeed male-dominated, especially the yards, but female sensitivity and aesthetics are truly helpful when it comes to choices that are necessary to complete each project. It is a fact that office doors open more easily for women, but in order for them to remain open, one needs to prove one's efficiency and make sacrifices.

What has been the most difficult time in your career to date?

As the Greek proverb says, "new beginnings are always difficult" and that is so true! I'm using this saying to express the difficulties in choosing and filtering countless ideas and creative approaches until each project is finalised.

And what was the most exciting moment?

Exciting is each project that is fulfilled. The materials, textures, smells and final tests are a great reward in what I do. But above all, the public response to the end result and the bliss in the eyes of customers is an incredible feeling.





How decisive is your personal aesthetic approach with regard to the end result, compared to the wishes of clients?

It is very important to tune in with the client, because only when that happens and I understand his needs and wishes, as far as the yacht is concerned, will I be able to create something both satisfying for me and successful for the client.

Is there a project that you are particularly proud of?

Each project has given me a different invaluable experience. Naturally, getting engaged in a yacht building project from stages A to Z, namely from the design drafts to name giving and launching, is quite demanding. As I have been fortunate enough to complete such projects in yards both in Greece and abroad, I do feel especially proud.

What project are you working on at the moment?

Fortunately, I happen to be working on a series of very interesting projects, most notably: a) the finalisation of the general arrangement for a 56m motor yacht, b) the repair and refurbishment of a 45m boat, and c) the modernization of a 25-year-old 30m sailing yacht.

What advice would you give to a new architect/ yacht designer?

Creators must always keep their mind "agile" and their spirit young. So feeling "young" myself (giggles ...) I cannot give any other advice but this: Keep fresh in mind, stay young in heart.

If you ever decided to move away from the yacht design sector at some point, what would you set your mind and hands on next and why?

Yacht design is not just my professional sphere, a sphere I could simply exit. It is the field in which I express my creativity. Its multi-faceted nature makes it unique and simply irreplaceable.

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