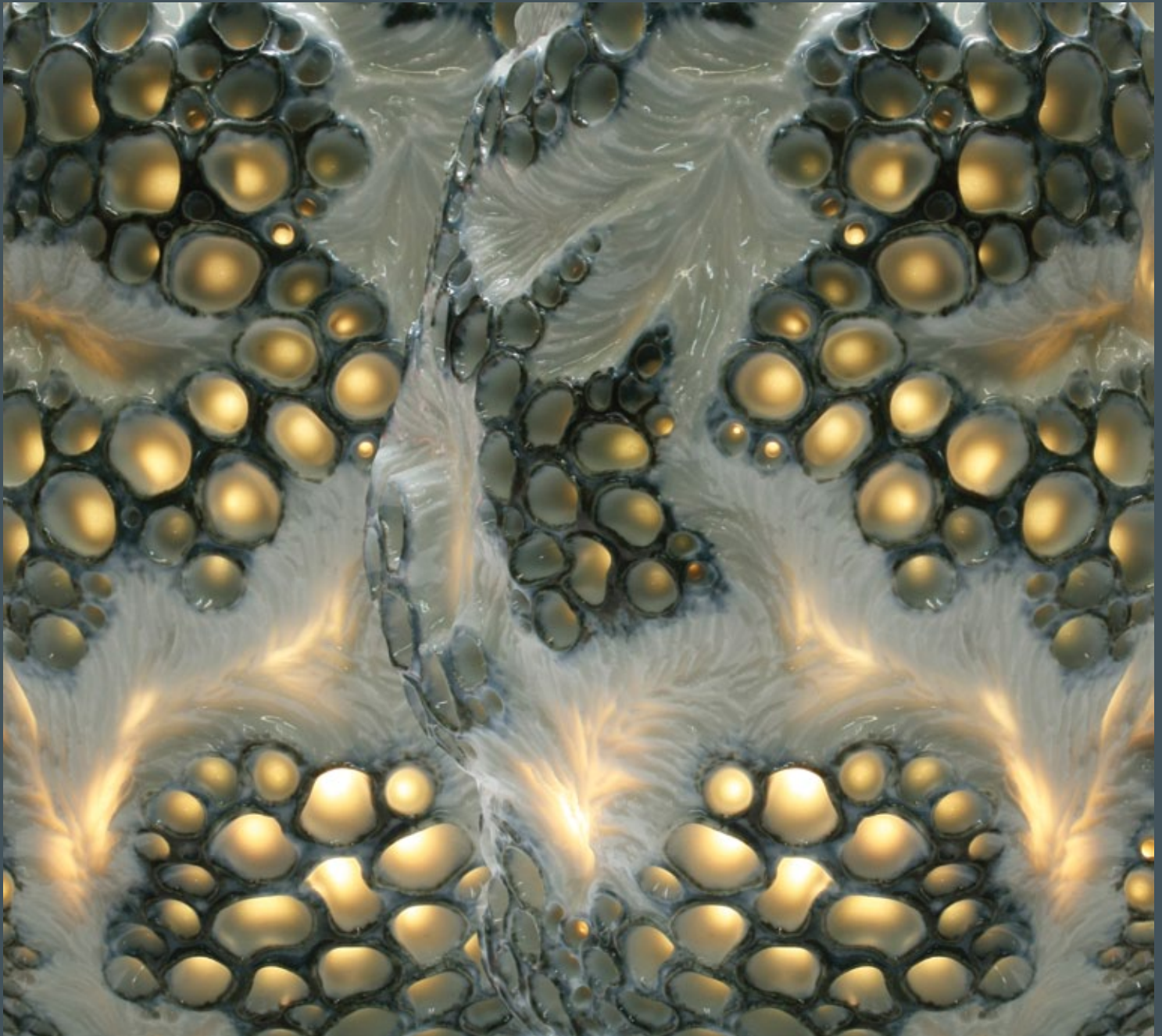


# Superyacht

INTERIOR DESIGN    EXTERIOR SPACE    CREATIVITY AND ARCHITECTURE



# DESIGN

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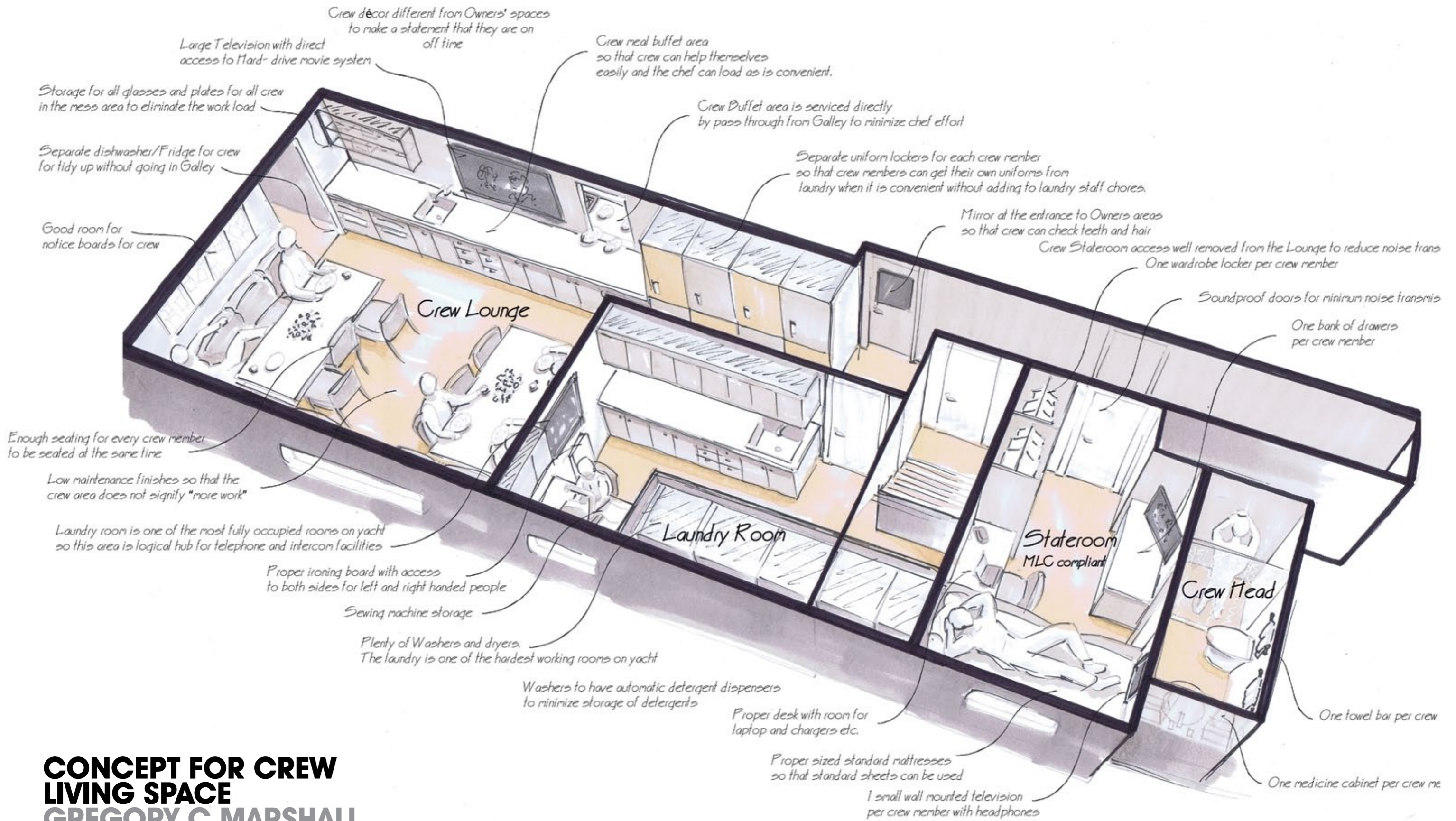


JUSTIN RATCLIFFE



# A QUESTION OF CREW

The team of naval architects and engineers at Gregory C Marshall Naval Architects (GCMNA) based in Victoria, Canada, covers all aspects of yacht design from the first inspirational brainstorming session with the client to the sea trials that validate the vessel's performance. GCMNA has launched several yachts over 24 metres, including the hugely influential *Big Fish* in 2010, and has other large projects in the pipeline that will both conform to the new Maritime Labour Code (MLC) regulations and also reduce the number of crew required for servicing the yacht. Studio principal Greg Marshall explains.



**CONCEPT FOR CREW  
LIVING SPACE  
GREGORY C MARSHALL  
NAVAL ARCHITECTS**

The next-generation superyacht will have to have next-generation crew quarters. The old concept that you can stuff 10 crew into a rathole and expect them to provide you with seven-star service with a smile while working ridiculous hours is simply flawed. It is something that has been proved time and time again, resulting in a disappointing owner and guest experience.

The new MLC guidelines for yachts over 300GT have received a lot of press lately for the negative effects on owner accommodation that complying with the rules will entail. The core intent of the rules is pretty elementary and many of them I agree with. We all basically want a good night's sleep, enough room to put our pants on, and a little privacy and a proper place to relax in our off-time. Sadly, most yachts don't offer these basic fundamentals in their crew quarters.



The volume of a yacht is a fixed constraint, so the challenge is how to offer these basic needs to the crew without sacrificing the owner's luxury, which is the whole reason he bought the yacht in the first place. In designing the next generation of superyachts, we have spent a great deal of time on this challenge. Fundamentally, we attack the problem by making the yacht less difficult to maintain and service in order to reduce the number of crew it takes to provide excellent service. Less crew is a realistic option, and that means that in a given amount of space you can give them better quarters.



The job description for most crew on board a typical yacht is 90 per cent cleaning service and 10 per cent the actual job they applied for. After a yacht has been at sea, the washing and polishing time it takes to get a yacht 'show ready' is ghastly. Our new projects have a demineralising system for washing down the yacht. This virtually eliminates the need for shaming after wash-down and cuts the labour enormously. The same demineralised water is piped to spray nozzles at all the hard-to-get-at windows, and to the laundry room for stain-free ironing. Just this one provision alone saves the time of one full-time crew member on a typical 45-metre yacht.

Laundry is probably the next largest labour consumer aboard. Typically, most laundry facilities on a superyacht are treated as an afterthought by the designer. The laundry usually starts at 6am and is going full tilt until 10pm, with some poor crew member trying to deal with the laundry of a small hotel through two small household washer-dryers, all the while trying to iron in the hallway. This fundamental operation is handled in the most labour-intensive fashion imaginable. Our new generation projects have proper laundry facilities set up for the volume of flow expected. A 45-metre high-service yacht needs at least three, or possibly four, large commercial washer-dryers. There needs to be good hanging space in the room as well as ironing space. We include drying racks in the design to eliminate the ironing of placemats, as well as a good tray system for rotating them into service with minimum effort.

The crew are expected to wear crisp uniforms and often change several times a day. Just the crew laundry alone becomes a logistical problem. The new projects we are designing have crew uniform storage within the laundry facilities so that the laundry person(s) can launder the clothes and place them in a personal laundry locker for each crew member to pick up when required. All of the laundry requirements must be convenient to the needs of the room; for example, there should also be a sewing machine station.

Lockers of sufficient size for all of the detergents for the entire trip must be in place so crew don't have to go searching through the ship's stores every time they need something. Also, as the laundry room is probably the room that is most often occupied on board, this seems like one of the most logical places to have as a telephone/security-monitoring hub for the boat. Even a simple item such as a TV greatly improves the working conditions for the person who spends an entire day there. It seems so basic, but it is sorely lacking on 98 per cent of the yachts out there.

Turnaround time for servicing the cabins is another easy target for reducing the labour needs aboard a superyacht. Simple things, such as designing the cabin to accommodate a rotation of three sets of linen and towels—one on the beds, one ready to go in a convenient locker and one in the laundry. In the heads we design small lockers with all of the cleaning supplies needed for that specific cabin. The locker should be discrete, so it is not seen by guests when the other drawers/lockers are in use. The time in and out of

the cabin (and therefore the imposition on the owner and guests) is greatly reduced and, in turn, greatly reduces the load on the crew.

How food and service is distributed throughout the yacht is also typically a huge time waster. I remember a customer jokingly explaining the process of him ordering steak sauce on a new 52-metre yacht. The stewardess goes to the kitchen to ask the chef, but the chef is busy preparing the next course, so he hands it to someone else who then goes off searching, so by the time he comes back the steak is cold and he is holding up the next course. The best thing is to have a dedicated locker right next to the dining area that is properly stocked with every conceivable need for the table. The speed with which these tasks can be carried out helps the crew and improves the guest experience on board. Similarly, we design into our projects small accessory lockers throughout the vessel, so that when a guest has a headache and asks for an aspirin, it is within easy reach.



In the past we were often asked by thoughtful owners to make the crew quarters as nice as the owner's quarters. In polling a lot of very experienced crew over the years, we have found that most of them prefer to have their spaces decorated differently and much more simply from the rest of the yacht as a way of designating that they are now on their 'off time'. In a lot of the new work on our drawing board, we are making the crew lounges more like chic internet cafes than the old-style cafeterias. Again, simple things such as making sure that all of the crew can sit at the same dining sitting

greatly reduces the load on the galley and the overall turnaround time.

I could go on and on with things that can be designed into the new generation of superyachts that allow the overall crew to be reduced and the service increased. The net effect is that by reducing the number of crew, we then reduce the real estate that is taken up to house them properly. This, in turn, makes it easier to address the basic needs for attracting

**“The job description for most crew on board a typical yacht is 90 per cent cleaning service and 10 per cent the actual job they applied for.”**

and keeping a good crew. We believe a carefully designed 45-metre yacht can go from a crew of 10 to eight, while improving the service aboard. With a crew of eight it is pretty easy to provide each of them with their own stateroom without impinging on the owner or guest accommodation. Where necessary, two cabins may share a head, but the end result is better crew accommodation, while providing an elevated experience for the owner through better service. ■