

PROJECT *Luxury*
SUMMER 2017 & ART

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Philippe Briand knows the demands of open waters as both a sailor and a yacht designer. He won the Half Ton Cup and the One Ton Cup in the Nineties in boats that he had designed himself, and his father was an Olympic sailor. Rated as one of Boat International's top 50 yacht designers in the world, his designs include competitors in the America's Cup, World Superyacht Awards winners, and the 73-metre Grace E.

The London-based Frenchman is a rare breed of designer who works on both racing sail yachts and on 100-metre super-yachts that number amongst the largest in the world. It is this balancing of lean sailing design with the needs of high-end luxury vessels that makes his design craft so compelling.

SAILING THROUGH THE WORLD OF LUXURY

When it comes to juggling the world of racers and mega-yachts, Philippe tells Project Luxury & Art that "the result is different but the approach is the same," and it

THE MAN BEHIND THE SUPER-YACHT

NAVAL ARCHITECT AND YACHT DESIGNER PHILIPPE BRIAND DESIGNED HIS FIRST IOR QUARTER TON AGED 16. HE WENT ON TO SEE HIS YACHT DESIGNS COMPETE IN THE AMERICA'S CUP, SETTING HIM ON A JOURNEY TO BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST RESPECTED SUPER-YACHT DESIGNERS. WE INTERVIEW THE MAN WHO SETS THE TRENDS FOR SAILING IN STYLE.



Egoist 100ft yacht concept



Vertigo 220ft

LIFESTYLE

is the above-and-beyond result he is focused on. “The best design is the one complying with the requirements, that goes further than what was asked for and that is superior to other yachts.”

Efficiency, sustainability and robustness are the essential elements of Briand’s designs, and to achieve them he must stay one step ahead of current techniques in yacht building. “Design is not science fiction,” he says with pragmatism, “a yacht of 2020 should be in line with the technology of that era, we need an anticipative vision.” To find out just what that yacht might look like he constantly monitors “what is happening in the entertainment industry, art, product design, and holiday trends.” Those trends tell him where design is going, and technological innovations drive further questions. “We could think about an iPad-driven yacht,” he muses, “would we still need a steering station?”

Removing artificiality from yachts, and designing them around both the natural world and the nature of the owner’s life, are factors that provide the foundation for Briand’s bespoke designs. In penning a design he wants to know “how does a person see his life on board? Is it pure entertainment or is it a wellness environment, so do we need quiet zones?” True luxury is not found in an excess of gadgets but in the ability of a vessel to connect the sailor with his environment. “Most yachts are the result of top technology, science and art,” he says. “We have made tremendous progress in all fields and we need to integrate that progress, for example, in the way you live or you would like to live. This is evident in the superstructures that are closer to nature and open spaces, which result in more

transparency, designs with glass and a simplicity where technology cannot be seen.”

A RETURN TO NATURE

This interplay between functionality, art, and lifestyle is something that shows through in Briand’s latest designs. Glass panelling is able to cast nature back on itself and it safely opens up the interior of a yacht to the elements. When asked about working with these dramatic glass designs, Philippe acknowledges the difficulties. “Glass is weight. The looks are light but the physical part is heavy. We need to take this into account when we consider the weight and the stability of the yacht. This proves once more that design and naval architecture are symbiotic.”

For the future, Philippe is “studying possible applications of foil technology on larger sailing yachts and even on a motor yacht.” These wing-style lifts allow boats to almost glide above the water, with decreased drag and at double the speed of the wind. The idea of using them on much larger boats is a truly exciting prospect and the latest indication that Briand can be relied upon to design the super-yachts of tomorrow.

Photos: courtesy of Philippe Briand; Guillaume Plisson



108ft yacht Inouï, designed by Briand and built at Vitters Shipyard