

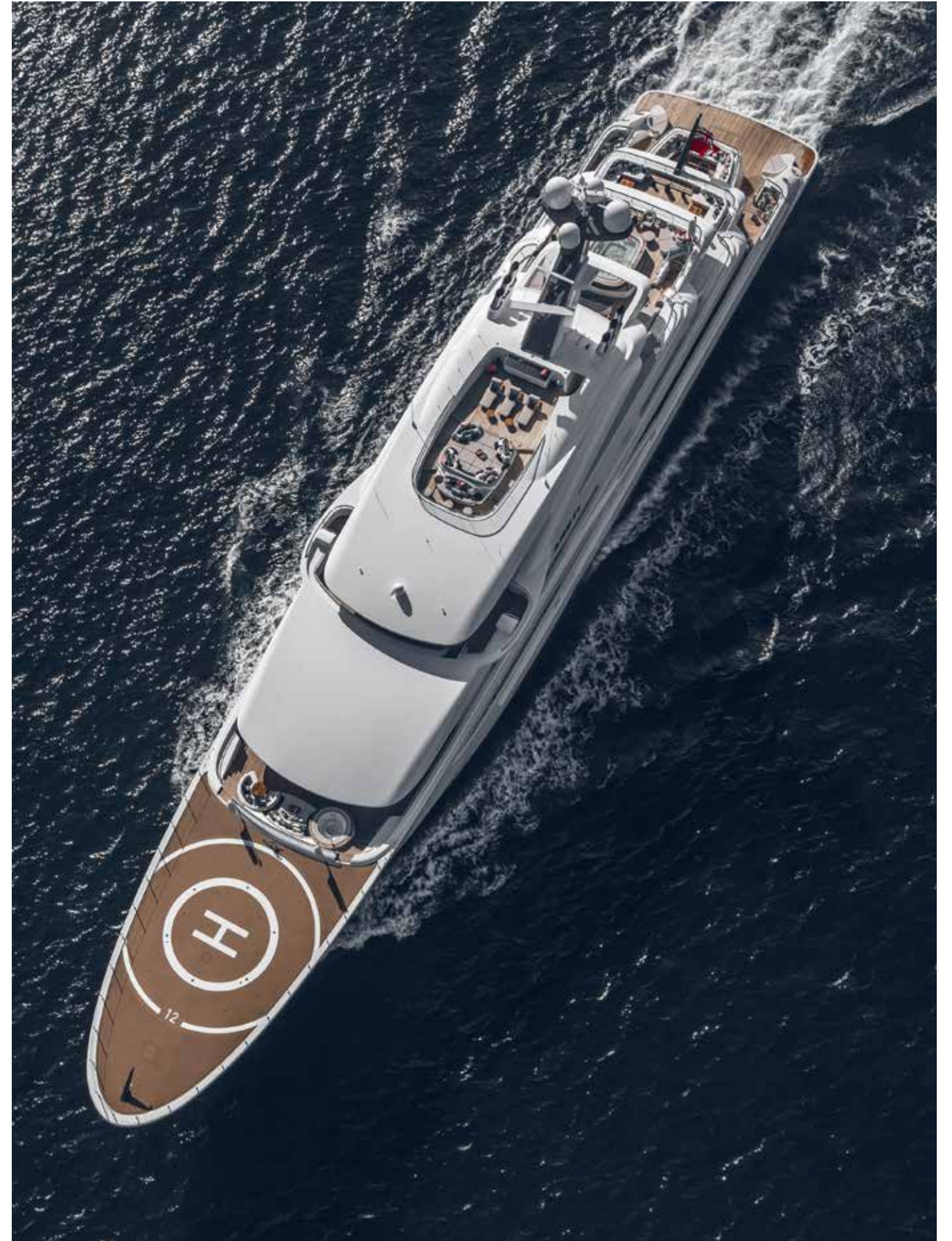
BY DIANE M. BYRNE



# CURATED CRUISING

**Art on yachts is no longer just a few paintings on the wall. Owners and designers are infusing spaces with custom pieces.**

OPPOSITE: COURTESY ARTELIER; RIGHT: TOMVANOSSANEN



A bronze sculpture of cyclists aboard the 279-foot *Areti* started with a series of watercolors (opposite), to show the riders in motion.



## Every season in the National Football League, the thousands

off fans who stream through the entrance to Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta are treated to quite the visual feast. A four-story-tall falcon made of polished stainless steel, its massive wings outstretched, is so remarkable that it appears to be in motion. Adding to the drama, its talons clutch a bronze football, scoring a touchdown. ¶ A similar bird of prey is on the bow of

the 295-foot Oceanco *DreAMBoat*. Both the stadium's statue (the world's largest avian sculpture) and the one aboard the yacht are by the same contemporary artist. Both were commissioned by Arthur Blank, who owns the Atlanta Falcons and the yacht. ¶ While Blank isn't the first to commission art for his superyacht, he is among a growing number of owners

who recognize that the possibilities for onboard artistic expression aren't limited to nice pictures sprinkled here and there. In fact, from fixed and removable sculptures adorning bows to entire stateroom and spa walls serving as canvases, art aboard yachts is heading in imaginative and inspiring directions. ¶ Aboard the 220-foot Amels *Aurora Borealis*, David



Knowles of the UK-based art-consultancy firm Artelier helped the owner treat an entire wall in the yacht's master stateroom like a canvas. Opposite the bed, there's a gold-leaf depiction of a mountain, with a lacquer for protection. The first step saw the wall assembled in the studio of the artist, who moved from the United States temporarily to Amels' home country of the Netherlands, Knowles says. The artist spent several months applying the gold

leaf there, and Artelier then transported the wall to the shipyard. ¶ Knowles says owners and designers especially want spas to be onboard focal points. "We've developed artwork for inside saunas and steam rooms, for the walls behind Jacuzzis," he says. These pieces present technical challenges because of moist, warm air. "In terms of working with artists, that's where our collaborations are really valuable," Knowles asserts. "We can

work with the artists to develop specialist fixings and to do tests on various materials to make sure that they're suitable for the space." ¶ A close collaboration with Winch Design in London ensured beauty and durability with the myriad flowers on the curved wall abaft the spa tub aboard *Plvs Ultra*, an Amels 242. Each flower is porcelain, adorned with gold leaf that was sealed, and adhered to the wall with specially developed glue. Artelier worked

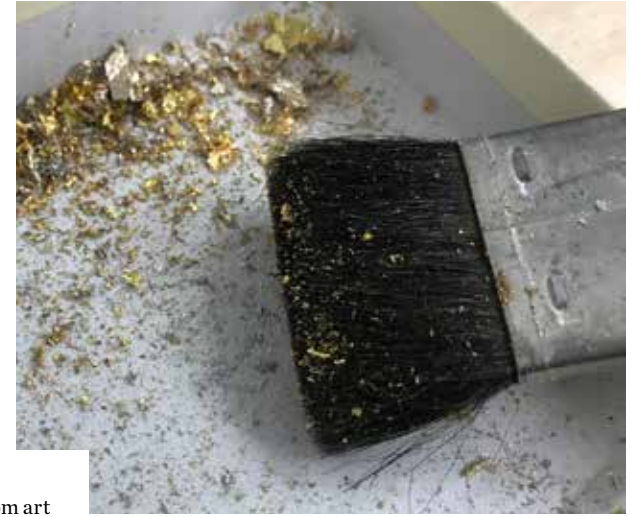
### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

While art specialists like Artelier take steps to protect artwork from wind, sun and other environmental damage, human factors still come into play aboard yachts. That's why crewmembers are trained to handle and clean artwork properly. Even carpets can be priceless antique textiles, and the most well-meaning guest can get clumsy with food or drinks.

### TENDER TREATMENT

When it came to special art, the owner of the 348-foot Lürssen *Amadea*, delivered in 2017, didn't stop with the custom art deco albatross gracing her bow. Stylist Espen Øino turned to an artist from the Netherlands to not only sculpt it from stainless steel but also create miniature versions for the yacht's two custom Windy tenders.

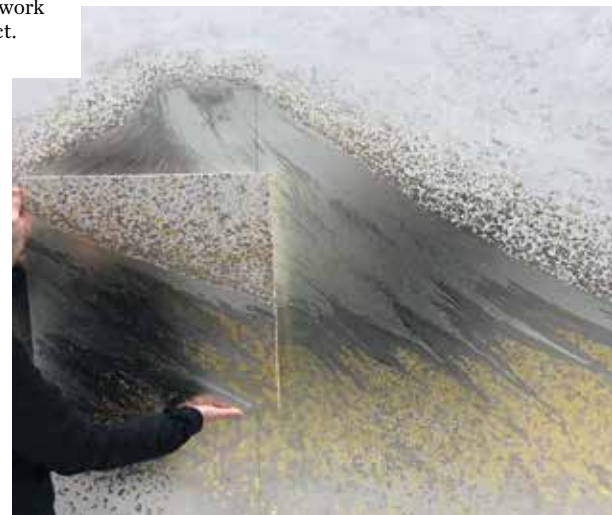
ABOVE: COURTESY AMELS; OPPOSITE: WINCH MEDIA



Creating custom art is much like building a custom yacht. The mountain scene on *Aurora Borealis* was a collaboration between the owner and the artist.



The US-based artist who created the mountain scene aboard the 220-foot *Aurora Borealis* moved to the Netherlands to work on the project.



COURTESY ARTELIER; NEXT SPREAD: JEFF BROWN



The gold-leaf wall on the Amels *Aurora Borealis* is protected with a lacquer finish.





with Winch Design on many other areas throughout the yacht too. “A yacht like that might involve 20 or 30 pieces, all highly bespoke and individual to the project,” Knowles explains. ¶ While some owners commission an extraordinary amount of one-of-a-kind artwork, others want one standout piece—in the form of a bow sculpture. Such sculptures may seem like a novelty, but they’re actually rooted in ancient-era figureheads that

adorned wooden sailing ships. And, as with those early expressions of the form, today’s bow sculptures often relate to a yacht’s name. There’s a phoenix, for example, aboard the 295-foot Lürssen *Phoenix 2*, as well as a shapely female posing with her arms behind her head aboard the 240-foot Lürssen *Titania*, the name of the queen of the fairies from Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. ¶ A giant gleaming jaguar, its

front left paw raised and the other paw resting on a football helmet, is at the bow of the 312-foot Lürssen *Kismet*. That yacht belongs to Shahid “Shad” Khan, owner of the NFL’s Jacksonville Jaguars. Constructed with a metallic coating that is as durable as it is bright, the jaguar has equally bright teal eyes. The removable sculpture’s dimensions make it all the more impressive: 6 feet, 6 inches high and 13 feet, 5 inches long. It weighs a hefty

220 pounds. ¶ Blank wanted the falcon on *DreAMBoat*’s bow to be removable as well because a helipad is in its proximity. Budapest-based Gábor Miklós Szóke, who created the falcon outside of Mercedes-Benz Stadium, visited *DreAMBoat* in build at Oceanco to better comprehend the yacht’s scale and study its technical details. He determined the sculpture needed to be “extra light and strong at the same time due to the extreme wind

load and weather conditions, such as the salty and humid air,” he says. ¶ For the design, Szóke was determined “to keep as much of the original character of the falcon as possible.” ¶ *DreAMBoat*’s falcon design, in cast aluminum, mimics the thousands of welded stainless-steel feathers in the stadium’s statue. It stands nearly 4 feet high, with a wingspan exceeding 5 feet. ¶ “The movement of the bird is similar, but it is more symmetrical

in order to align it with the *DreAMBoat* design,” Szóke says. In fact, because the artist liked the yacht’s streamlined edges, “I’ve redefined the design of the big falcon to accommodate this.” ¶ In other words, the artwork became not just an element aboard the yacht but also an integral reflection of it. That’s a far cry from an owner choosing a painting to hang on a bulkhead. It’s form and function combining to create beauty with new meaning. ♥

**“We like to work with clients and push the boundaries of where art can be provided.” — DAVID KNOWLES, ARTELIER**

COURTESY ARTELIER

#### FUNDAMENTAL FUNCTION

Similar to residential projects, with charter yachts, “The art is considered an integral part of the yacht,” David Knowles says. “Therefore, it’s a close collaboration with the yard and the designers to curate a selection of artworks that work well with the interior and appeal to wide international tastes.”