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Helm consult

The PJ SuperSport 48's
sculptural helm station...

► Modern Edge is an aptly named industrial design company based in Portland, Oregon. Its designers worked with the Palmer Johnson design office to create a helm station that is practical, beautiful and matches the design philosophy of the new SuperSport series.

Charles Austen Angell, who heads the company and currently chairs the Industrial Designers Society of America, says one of the challenges his team had to tackle was to fit all that was needed in a sturdy structure made of few modules. Built in stainless steel and FRP and painted to match the hull color and the yacht's racy lines, the low-profile console integrates the instruments and screens in a seamless way. modernedge.com

+ FOR MORE NEWS, SEE PAGE 28
AND MORE ON THE PJ SUPERSPORT, PAGE 70

THIS MONTH: Why Chapman Ducote's hooked on classics, offshore sailor Sara Hastreiter and six eco-trendsetting yachts ►

GOLD RUSH

What's the opposite of status quo? The first Palmer Johnson SuperSport is the answer to this question.

Words – Cecile Gauert Photography – Quin Bisset, Q&K Media



This carbon yacht oozes the best of automotive styling with a soupçon of later-generation Palmer Johnson genes.

The 161-foot golden *Khalilah* was a hot topic of conversation in Miami Beach, Florida, in February, when she tied up at a private home on the Indian Creek Waterway, a stone's throw away from the Yacht & Brokerage Show. She was not part of the multimillion-dollar showcase, but her abstract sculptural quality, golden pearlescent/metallic finish and black radar arch made her an unavoidable star attraction among a sea of white yachts. Craft of all sorts milled about as their passengers craned their necks for a better look.

Cool about all the attention the yacht was getting, as if expecting the accolades, Palmer Johnson's owner, Timur Mohamed, joined us on the yacht's massive aft deck. "This yacht has the beam of a seventy-meter," he said.

"This," he added, sweeping his hand across the expansive aft deck, "is what it is all about."

On the water, the SuperSport 48m, despite her wide body aft, is sleek and sporty with a long foredeck ending in what appears to be a reverse bow. Above deck, nothing is revealed — no tenders or cranes, no anchors, winches or mast clutter the impeccable deck. Only perceptible below the water surface is a wave-piercing element designed to part the water. Waves may rise occasionally to the level of side deflectors that also serve as interesting stylistic elements.

This carbon yacht oozes the best of automotive styling with a soupçon of later-generation Palmer Johnson genes. The sun and skylounge decks meld into the profile, and the extremely slanted windshield visually absorbs the pilothouse into a sweeping arch that ends on the main deck near the transom. There is no towering superstructure, a feature Palmer Johnson eschewed many years ago.

From the dock, the yacht offers a much different perspective and reveals her imposing scale. Yet, even as she towers above you (she is 53 feet tall from the waterline to the top of the mast), little prepares you for the space that the first in the new PJ SuperSport series offers.

The aft main deck sits on top of the widest part of the hull, courtesy of two sponsons that are designed to give this unusual displacement yacht her stability. Upon closer inspection, these thin appendages have barely noticeable doors built right above them to allow the crew to unload tenders and toys. Seen from the inside, they help expand the storage space significantly. Two side garages, one with a fueling station, hold a 23-foot tender and three Jet Skis in twin spaces that frame a large beach club protected from the elements by a wide glass door. With at least three different functions, the sponsons are an integral part of the design, but most notably contribute largely to the great

feeling of space on board. The aft deck's square footage, almost 1,200 square feet per PJ's specifications, is closer to what you'd expect on a multihull.

Compounding the effect is the extensive use of glass, which opens up views in every direction. Shapely railings support glass panels that break the wind effectively but don't interrupt the view. The largest panes of glass are found forward at the main salon level. "They are the biggest glass panels aside from Steve Jobs' boat [the *Feadship Venus*]," says Mohamed without a hint of braggadocio.

Each panel framing the superstructure at the salon's level measures 22 feet by more than seven feet without mullions to interrupt the view. Palmer Johnson worked with New Zealand glass specialist Glasshape, which made and installed the specially formulated DuraShield Marine glass, comprised of two layers of laminated glass with an interlayer of resin to refract heat. One inch thick, each panel weighs more than 2,200 pounds, according to Andrew Forrest, who heads the Glasshape North America office in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. "They are the largest windows installed on a superyacht in the United States," he says. The panes were shipped from New Zealand's North Island to Wisconsin and then trucked to the yard at Sturgeon Bay.

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This alone illustrates the extent of effort and innovation involved with this new series. It has been under development since 2010 when Mohamed came across a concept that would serve as a starting point for a yacht able to shake things up in the conservative world of yachting, a yacht that would nudge the needle forward and would be able to generate an emotional response. "We wanted to tick all the boxes of what owners want," he says. "The design intent had a clear and bold goal from the start: to create superyachts that did not compromise speed, efficiency, comfort and space. Once we had exterior elements we liked along with the new hull form, the next [goal] was that design, technology and performance had to be woven seamlessly into the essence of the yacht. We were aiming to capture the hearts and imagination of the discerning and knowledgeable."

Hours of research and development went into the project with the first designs produced in fall 2011. A contract for hull number one came a few months later. "It was a high-risk project," says Mohamed, who admits he likes these sorts of challenges. But it was well worth it; a second hull sold earlier this year.

Glasshape specialists, who work closely with classification societies to ensure the glass meets their requirements, carefully planned for thermal expansion and contraction and vibrations on these, the largest glass panels ever installed on a superyacht in the U.S.





Bold, in-your-face styling may suggest this yacht harbors no secrets, but the PJ SuperSport is full of them, from unfolding wing stations (top) to a stinger-like wavepiercing bow (below) and sponsons that give her a tremendous beam aft. Khalilah's gold finish is one of many custom touches in a highly personalized and playful interior, as seen in the salon (far right).



See more on the iPad edition



"Innovative is when you change something fundamental," Mohamed says. And with this first SuperSport, a displacement yacht without gyro or fin stabilizers, capable of reaching 30 knots and with the space of a multihull, he seems to have reached that goal.

"Thirty knots on a displacement hull simply does not happen," he says.

Except in this case, of course, it does. In February, shortly before heading to Florida, the yacht's GPS registered 29.9 knots before further fine-tuning was done.

Thanks to the naval architecture (a long and slender main hull with a pinch aft of the wave-piercing bow) and the lightweight carbon composite construction (saving around 22 tons compared to aluminum, PJ estimates), the SuperSport 48 requires relatively modest power to reach her noteworthy speed. The engines are twin 16V MTU diesel M94s from the 2000 series with total maximum horsepower of 5,200. (A planing yacht of similar size requires bigger engines or more of them to reach comparable speeds.)

Palmer Johnson is no stranger to innovation. In the 1960s, the yard took a big step forward by building fast

aluminum sailing yachts, eventually expanding into the megayacht segment where it carved its niche with alluring and sporty yachts developed in cooperation with Italian design firm Nuvolari Lenard. In fact, what attracted Mohamed to the company he ultimately purchased was the innovative Sportyacht series launched in the mid-2000s; the first PJ120, *Cover Drive*, was his yacht. "It's all part of the PJ story. From *Fortuna* (a fast 100-footer built for the king of Spain) to the Sportyachts to the SuperSport series, PJ has always bred performance yachts with dynamic styling ahead of the market," Mohamed says.

It helps that the builder has found kindred spirits in its clients. Palmer Johnson built the first SuperSport for a repeat customer who, in 2007, took delivery of the golden-color Nuvolari Lenard-designed 150-foot O' *Khalila* (now *Skyfall II*). Unlike her predecessor, which was built in aluminum like all the Sportyachts, *Khalilah* is built entirely in carbon composite — carbon fiber sandwich and Vinylester.

To build what is the largest private yacht to date in carbon composite, the builder selected a Norwegian shipyard well versed in the material. Brødrene Aa,



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Technical spaces
combine beauty
with practicality,
seen in the gold-
plated engines
and on the modern
bridge, which
integrates control
panels from Praxis
Automation.

specializing in fast ferries, built the first DNV-approved vessel in GRP sandwich in the 1970s and a few well-known yachts marketed under the Norship name, including the 116-foot *Moonraker*, once the world's fastest yacht, in the early 1990s.

The black carcass of carbon composite it delivered, with engines and drives in place, made its way from Norway to Wisconsin, where the PJ craftsmen installed all the mechanics, electronics and a complex network of lights, and built the custom interior to the owner's requirements.

This owner wanted a simple but playful interior. A spiral of LED lights inset in the entrance foyer overhead, a glass octopus and low-lying colorful seats on top of wide-beam parquet flooring set the tone. But no matter how playful the décor, it is not long before the eyes wander toward the floor-to-ceiling windows that frame the salon. The views are tantalizing.

PJ's standard layout calls for a larger main salon, a galley down and a palatial master suite sprawling full beam forward on the main deck. *Khalilah* has a different layout according to her owner's wishes. The galley, a contemporary and alluring space of stainless steel and orange lacquer was installed on the main deck at the owner's request. Two nearly identically sized owner's suites occupy the space forward, benefiting from great views through vertical portholes.

The guest cabins, including a comfortable VIP with sculpted carpets that feel heavenly on bare feet, are on the lower deck. Each has a highly personalized décor, beautiful marble and colorful mosaics that required exacting work from the PJ craftsmen. The crew cabins (four twins and one single for the captain) are forward of a pleasant crew mess. A clever use of skylights allows light to stream belowdecks and the space is both practical and comfortable.

The pilothouse, accessed from the main deck, mirrors

by its design the progressive styling of the yacht herself, and the wide windscreen offers a surprisingly good view despite the pronounced slant. A second, smaller helm station or "skybridge" is on the sun deck above. Wing stations are on foldout balconies that are only revealed upon closer inspection.

It also requires close inspection to find the yacht's navigation mast. The only hint of its presence belowdeck is the round shape of the teak detail forward of the sunpads on the foredeck. Opening a teak-covered trap and descending a steep ladder reveals a massive and perfectly finished mooring room where several crewmembers, even very tall ones, can stand fully erect to supervise mooring operations. Two anchors drop vertically from the bottom of that room, a system the yard chose to avoid unsightly anchor pockets.

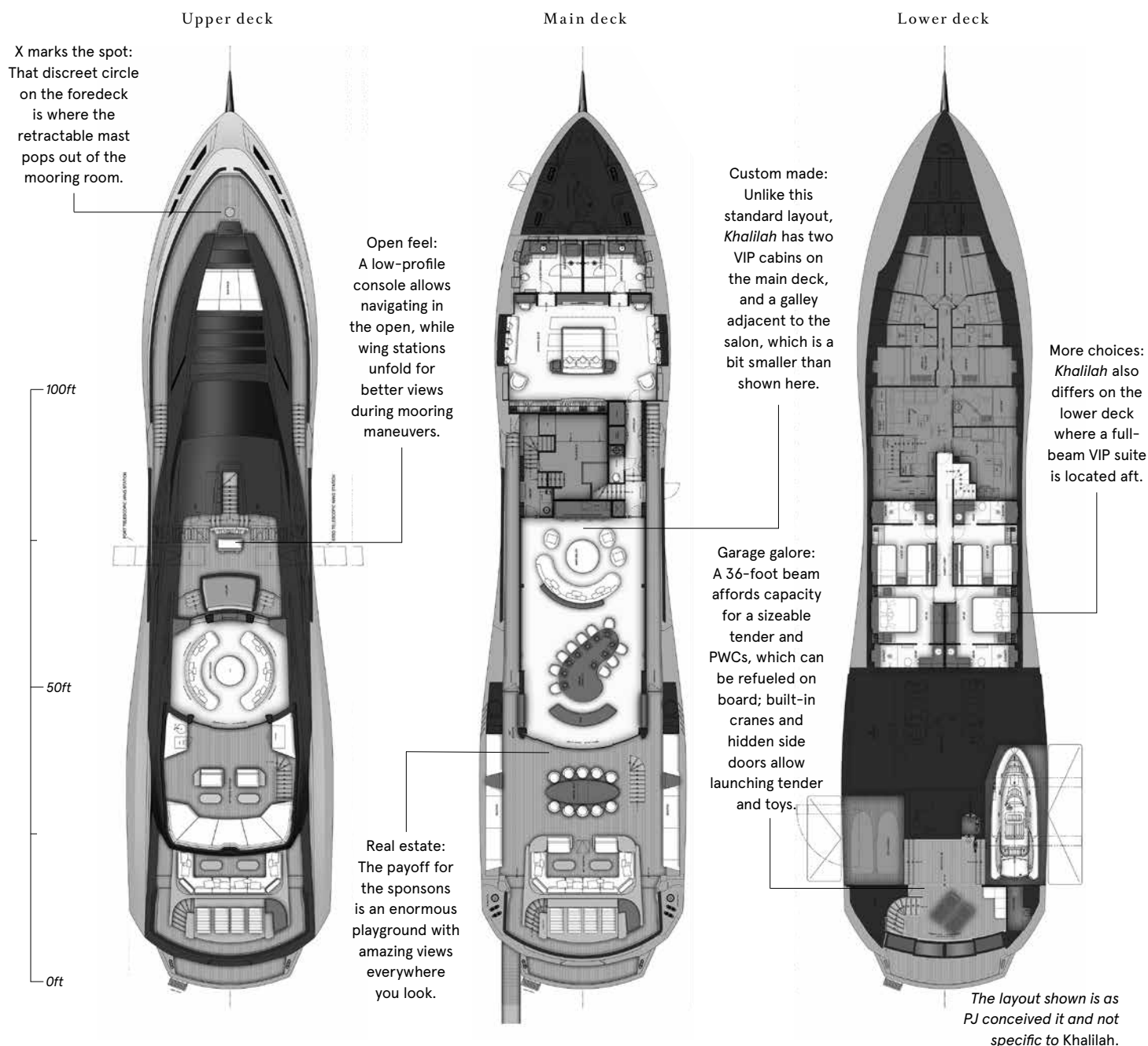
Practicality dictated most of the choices the shipyard made in the engine room, from the selection of sound damping material (Dynamat, a product commonly used in automotive and architectural applications) to the fixed Kohler generators and the conventional diesel power plant included, the yacht's first engineer tells us.

Most, but not all choices had a practical base. When you seek to provoke an emotional reaction and create a strong attachment from an owner to his or her yacht, details count. *Khalilah*'s owner clearly has a thing for the color gold, which is found in the custom finish on the two MTU engines.

Gold suggests glamour and confidence but also courage and passion. It took all of it to imagine and build the first SuperSport; now let's hope the golden *Khalilah* will also mean prosperity for the forward-thinking American yacht builder. ■



SuperSport 48 – Palmer Johnson



LOA: 160' 8" (49m)
Beam: 36' (11m)
Draft: 6' 9" (2.1m)
Gross tonnage:
 approx. 490 GT
Power: 2 x 2,600-hp
 MTU 16V 2000 M94
Speed (max/cruise):
 30/28 knots

Range: 1,500 nm
 @ 24 knots
Fuel capacity:
 9,150 U.S. gallons
 (with extended fuel)
Generators:
 2 x 80kW Kohler
Freshwater capacity:
 1,585 U.S. gallons

Propellers: 2 x Servogear
 Ecoflow variable pitch
Gray/black water capacity:
 1,189 U.S. gallons
Finish: Awlcraft SE Topcoat
Owner and guests: 12
Crew: 9
Construction: Carbon
 composite

Classification: DNV +1A1 HSLC
 Yacht R0 Yacht, MCA Large
 Commercial Yacht Code (LY2)
Naval architecture:
 Palmer Johnson
Exterior design:
 Palmer Johnson
Interior design:
 Palmer Johnson/owner

Builder/year:
 Palmer Johnson/2014
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