

# Robb Report

33rd ANNUAL

**BEST  
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BEST**

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LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

In a typical year, no sooner does *Robb Report* put one Best of the Best issue to bed than we begin to drive, sip, fly, observe and taste our way to the next. These past 12 months, of course,

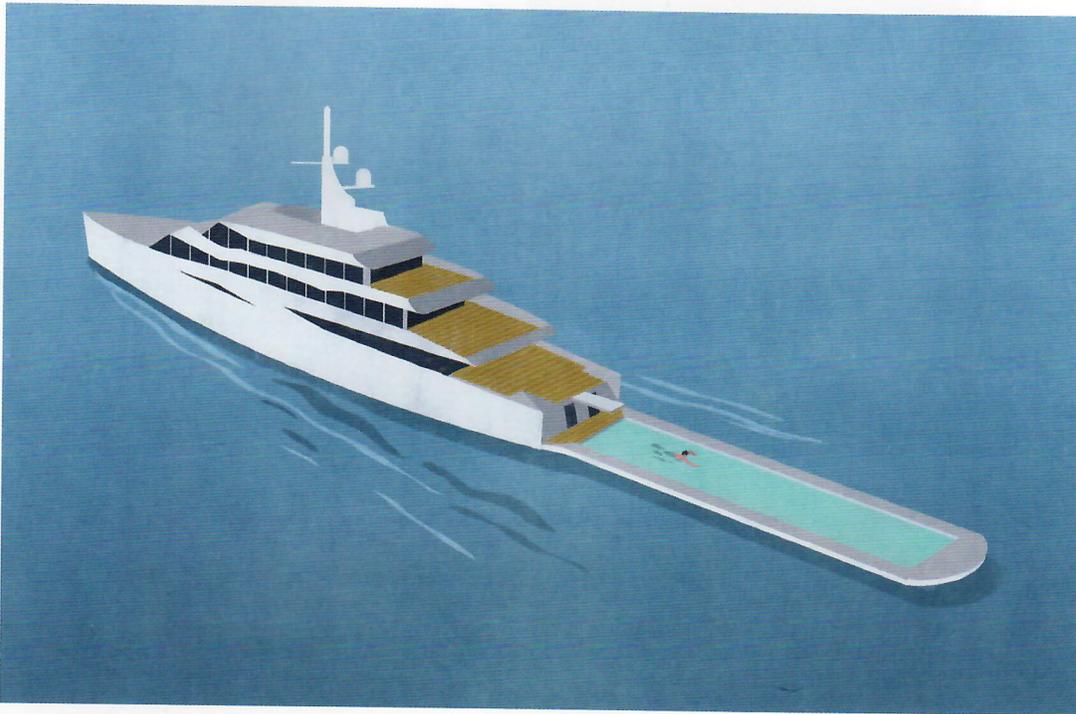
## **BEST OF THE BEST**

were anything but typical. Even so, our editorial team managed to scour the luxury universe for the truly exceptional in 2021. Here, the superlatives we have identified in 15 essential categories.



# WATER

By Michael Verdon, Howard Walker and Julia Zaltzman



## THE BIG IDEA

# Transom Demand

**The beach club** became mainstream on yachts around 20 years ago, when designers realized that the lowly tender garage would make a nice oceanside cabana instead. Beach clubs have since evolved into far more sophisticated spaces, thanks to open-hull sides and deeper enclaves, with gyms, spas, bars and, on larger yachts, even dive centers.

That desire for more private ocean access has moved beyond supersizing beach clubs to actually reshaping the stern. "There's been a slow burn of bringing the inside out," says J. David Weiss, an American designer who has created superyachts for Heesen, CRN and other builders. "The desire for access at the stern is important to owners, who want both openness and privacy."

Weiss recalls designing what was initially a small pool inside the beach club of the 240-foot *Yalla*, from CRN. Then, he says, "the owner wanted it as a significant destination, so it kept growing. It eventually lengthened the boat by more than 30 feet."

*Rebeca*, the first of Benetti's Oasis 40M series, actually reduced interior space in order to apportion more real estate to the stern; its 900-square-foot open transom includes an infinity pool and rear "transformer" steps that lower into the water, with the opening sides adding at least another 10 feet to the 28-foot beam. Owner Tim Ciasulli discovered other benefits as well. "On most boats, you can't sit at the stern because of spray or engine exhaust," he says, but on *Rebeca* "you sit at water level but facing backward. The speeds are slow enough to let you really see the ocean—it's like riding a big surfboard."

Weiss believes the trend will only accelerate. "I'm working on a 223-foot project, and one of the most significant things the owners want is to expand the beach club," he says. "There's a huge appetite now for origami-like structures folding out of the superstructure."



Pairing smart design with a timeless look, the Hoek-designed *Halekai*—Hawaiian for “home on the sea”—is the fourth Truly Classic 128-foot sailing yacht delivered by the UK’s Pendennis shipyard. But this yacht is quite different from its sisters. The owner, an experienced yachtsman who has previously owned several Hoek designs, wanted to sail around the world on a traditional-looking vessel, but he also wanted new innovations for long-distance remote cruising as well as superyacht and bucket racing. The designers reengineered areas belowdecks to make changing sails faster for crew, while also creating an easy transition from cruise to race mode when competing in regattas or outrunning weather. The yacht’s long, lithe lines are enduringly beautiful yet benefit from a proven hull.

New York designer Ken Fulk collaborated with Hoek on the interior, taking inspiration from Hawaiian history and culture. Quarter-sawn teak finished in matte lacquer (to show the grain) is paired with white-painted panels to give the cabin a traditional warm look. On the exterior, the spinnaker sports a large gold Hawaiian motif. *Halekai* offers the best of modern sailing: a classic shape that dresses up any anchorage, but with practical designs that make it a joy to sail.

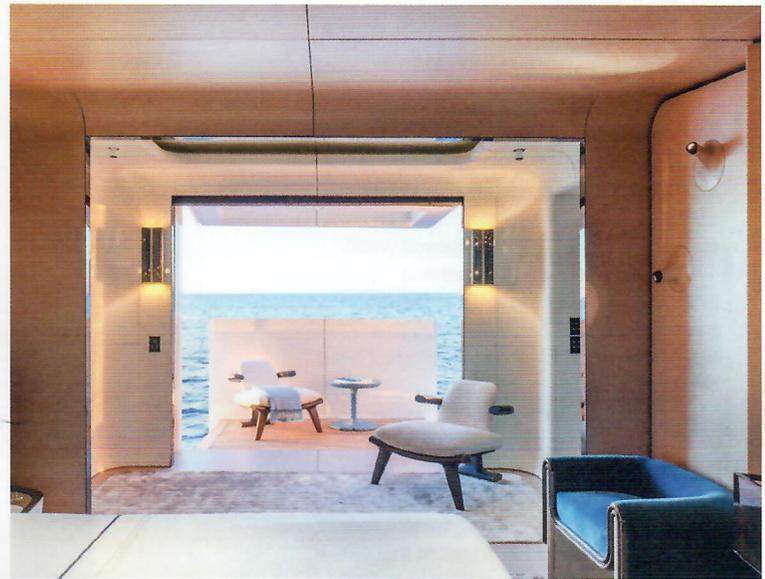
## *Halekai*

SAILING  
YACHT



## CLUB M

INTERIOR



When Achille Salvagni learned that his next client was one of America's most influential luxury real-estate developers, he leaned into the pressure that came with that knowledge. The Rome-based architect has a string of winning superyacht designs, but the 130-foot *Club M* is arguably his most successful.

Taking inspiration from the halcyon days of air travel, where plane cabins practically doubled as artists' canvases, Salvagni used high-contrast materials, including textured wood and polished

brass, to create what he calls a "soft, serene envelope." *Club M*'s walls and ceilings are clad in light leather, for effects both visual and tactile, while light-colored limed-oak walls, dark eucalyptus details and oak floors provide a natural feel. High-design touches come in the form of bespoke door handles, hand-knitted silk carpets, a floating staircase and sculpted Italian marble sinks, with the yacht's materials and shapes brought into harmony by the soft curves of its walls and the ceilings' gentle slopes.