

# DESIGN EVENT 2

DECOREX



## DECOREX 2012: AT HOME AT SEA

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Decorex is a veteran of the design world, celebrating its 35th anniversary this year. Each year, a programme of seminars explores the different realms of design. This year saw SYD Editor Justin Ratcliffe talk with interior designers Gabriel Bernardi of Coote & Bernardi and Kamini Ezralow of Ezralow Design. Both designers specialise in residential projects, but also created the interiors aboard the award-winning Heesen yachts *Celestial Hope* and *Perle Noire* respectively. During the discussion, they looked at the parallels between land-based and superyacht design and at the role of residential designers in the superyacht industry.

While much of the hour's discussion explored how the two designers adapted to working on the interior of a superyacht as opposed to a land-based interior, Justin Ratcliffe also brought up a point that had been raised at the previous evening's SuperyachtDesign Summit. The panel of designers at the summit all expressed reservations about how successfully residential designers can adapt to yacht design. Dickie Bannenberg, in particular, mentioned an occasion when his experience of working with a residential designer was less than positive. Justin asked Ezralow and Bernardi their opinion and whether either of them had found any resistance to their involvement, because of lack of industry experience.

"There was definitely initial resistance, but we were there for the client," commented Ezralow. "There was a lot of controversy, to be honest, but a few very

prominent people in the industry came out and said it was a refreshing design. Others said that our style shouldn't be on a boat, that it was residential."

For Bernardi, who was brought in on the *Perle Noire* project halfway through the build, the initial doubts from the shipyard and designers were soon forgotten when they realised that he was enabling decisions from the owner faster than before. "The owners had a whole list of decisions that had to be made each day which was sent by email from both yard and designer, and they felt daunted," he said. "So they wanted someone to be the 'interfacer' between the yard and themselves, to help them create something beautiful."

While both accepted that there were things that as residential designers they had had to learn—such as industry terminology—in the final analysis their approaches were basically the same for the superyachts as any other design project. "I approached *Celestial Hope* in very much the same way that I approach a residential project: it's all about the detail," said Ezralow.

Bernardi admitted that he had to get used to the fact that the structure you are working with is unchangeable—"You can't decide to remove a wall or add pieces like in a house". Conversely, he appreciated the order and organisation of working together with an established superyacht builder.

Both designers were adamant that not only was there room for residential designers in the superyacht industry, but that they could bring a unique perspective to an industry that tended to follow formulaic solutions.

"From an interior perspective, I think there is still room for residential design in the yacht world," insisted Ezralow. "To be honest, I often get bored when I go on boats. Everything is the same. It's all very masculine. There is not that layering and detail that you find in land-based interiors."

Bernardi agreed. "Residential designers can bring in these extra layers of design," he said. "I think superyachts are moving towards a more residential feel and I think this comes from the fact that people want a space that they will enjoy living in, entertaining in and relaxing in."