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PERFECT HARMONY

With a major refit, the 170-foot Amels *Kiss the Sky*,
launched in 2001, finds new life as the 180-foot *Harmony*.

BY JUSTIN RATCLIFFE



‘Refitting is a kind of alchemy,’

says Alberto Amico, the fourth-generation family member to head the Amico & Co. shipyard in Italy. “It requires numerous ingredients, and if there is the smallest imbalance—in know-how, management or even the inability to find a good marble cutter—then the magic is lost.”

A successful refit combines traditional shipbuilding skills with a knack for problem solving that only comes with experience. The scope of work nearly always expands as the project progresses, so the many variables have to be calculated while keeping a close eye on budgets and production schedules.

It was with this in mind that Imperial—the Monaco-based management, new construction, sales and charter company—turned to Amico & Co. for the refit of *Kiss the Sky*. Designed by Terence Disdale and launched by Amels in 2001, the 170-foot, 7-inch (52-meter) yacht had been put through her 15-year Lloyd’s survey in the United States and was for sale. On the outside, her dark blue hull and white superstructure were still contemporary, but the Patrick Knowles interior design dated to a 2009 refit.

For an interior revamp, Imperial could have gone to any number of yards, but the client also wanted to enhance the functionality of the yacht by transforming the lazarette into a spa and beach club with steam room, shower, bar and lounge. This was a much more

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CLOCKWISE FROM FACING PAGE:
Harmony's raised aft-deck loungers increase the headroom below; The original lazarette was transformed into a fully appointed spa and beach club.



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challenging proposition that required adding around 9 feet to the stern, increasing the overall length to just over 180 feet (55 meters). Amico & Co. specializes in complex engineering works, which is one reason the yacht was transported to Italy.

"They were able to accept the short time frame of six months requested by the owner," says Julia Stewart, Imperial's Monaco director. "Another plus side was that the yard is based in Genoa, a stone's throw from the Imperial headquarters, which meant our own experienced managers could be on site within a couple of hours and stay several days or weeks in a row, to supervise and implement the owner's instructions."

Aware of the tight schedule, Amico & Co. dispatched a team to Florida to conduct a feasibility study before the client had signed the refit contract. When the yacht arrived in Genoa in late December 2016, her hull was 3-D-scanned, and the technical office began the naval architecture and stability calculations for the longer waterline length. A noise and vibration analysis was also carried out to avoid cavitation that might result from the new hull shape.

Now named *Harmony*, the yacht's first stage of the refit began with cutting the steel hull just abaft the propellers, which had to be dismantled along with the drive shafts. A new 18-foot (5.5-meter) block was then welded into place. To avoid a complete hull repaint, this new section had to match the existing dark blue livery seamlessly.

The engine room machinery was in perfect working order and only the generators were replaced with new John Deere units. But a tiller arm connecting the two rudders in the old lazarette had to be re-engineered so it could be integrated out of sight into the teak-lined beach club. In addition, the sun loungers on the deck immediately above were raised onto a platform to provide the requested headroom and space for a larger transom door.

Luca Dini Design was engaged for the interior restyling. Taking care to retain as much of the existing joinery as possible, the studio created mood boards to reimagine and refresh the décor.

"The time factor was critical," Dini says. "Normally we follow a linear design process, starting with realistic renders for the client's approval before moving on to the architectural drawings and specific materials. With *Harmony*, each phase had to happen simultaneously. It was no good, for example, ordering a new sofa that couldn't be delivered for months. Everything had to be available at short notice."

Having collaborated with the owner on previous yacht projects, Dini had some idea of his tastes. But



the delicate interior work had to start while Amico & Co. was still engaged in the grimy job of extending the hull and gutting the lazarette.

“The most challenging part of a refit like this is managing the interior outfitting and heavy engineering at the same time,” says Daniele Di Giampaolo, co-director of technical and sales at Amico & Co. “With work-scope variations and integrations requested on a daily basis by the client, planning and teamwork are essential. You have to think on your feet and make instant decisions to keep the project moving.”

The freestanding furniture in the main and upper deck lounges was upgraded and upholstered with custom fabrics in crisp shades of blue, white and gray. The removal of a fire door in the main salon opened the floor space and added to the sense of airiness and light. Coupled with new Tai Ping carpets and accessories from Italian designer brands such as Baldi, Fendi, Visionnaire and Giorgetti, the furniture, fabrics and space have a gently masculine style with a

TOP AND FACING PAGE: Before and after images of the salons and bridge reveal how Luca Dini refreshed the interior décor while retaining many of the core materials. ABOVE LEFT: *Kiss the Sky* comes out of the water at the Amico & Co. yard in Genoa, Italy.

hint of nautical tradition.

Existing oak cabinetry and other core materials were revarnished to harmonize with new finishes in translucent onyx, shimmering gold leaf and natural leather. All the halogen lights were replaced with more energy-efficient LED units and fixtures that could be fitted without having to drill new holes in the overheads.

All the fabrics were changed in the four guest staterooms and full-beam owner's suite, together with the bedheads, surface treatments and closets. Marble panels in the bathrooms were also replaced, while gold-finished spouts and door handles were

DAVIDE PAMBIANCHI - FREELANCENET



rechromed with a contemporary nickel finish.

This replace-and-preserve process also extended to the exterior decks, where the fitted furniture had old-fashioned teak moldings around its base. If the moldings had been removed, unsightly halo marks

ABOVE AND FACING PAGE: *Harmony's* extended after section is clearly visible when compared with *Kiss the Sky* (left).

would show in the decking, so they underwent modern color treatments instead.

On the bridge deck, a bar and TV were stripped out and substituted with a piano. The layout was rearranged so the space could double as a cinema, and the yacht's audiovisual system was replaced with the latest equipment. Larger TV screens were installed inside and out, including a 65-inch screen in the beach club.

Crew and service areas also underwent extensive refurbishing. The galley was replaced and its functionality improved with fitted cabinets, high-end appliances and new worktops. The wheelhouse also was upgraded in line with the rest of the interior, and a Telemar integrated navigation system was installed.

Harmony is an elegant example of how a well-managed refit can enhance an aging yacht's livability, boost her charter potential and raise her resale value. Arguably the centerpiece of the whole transformation is her new spa and beach club. With its lofty ceiling, breezy access to the aft platform and vibrant fabrics from Thibaut's Calypso collection, the space is—quite literally—a breath of fresh sea air. **Y**

For more information: amicoshipyard.com, imperial-yachts.com

BLUE PRODUCTIONS

LOA: 180ft. 9in. (55.10m)
BEAM: 29ft. 6in. (9m)
DRAFT: 10ft. 1in. (3.2m)
CONSTRUCTION: steel & aluminum
DISPLACEMENT (full load): 600 tons
MAIN ENGINES: 2 x 1,180-hp Cummins KTA38-M2
GENERATORS: John Deere 6068AFM85 tier 3/stage III Zenoro

FUEL: 31,129 gal. (117,838L)
WATER: 4,607 gal. (17,443L)
SPEED (max.): 15 knots
SPEED (cruising): 12 knots
RANGE: 5,000 nm at 12 knots
STABILIZERS: Quantum Zero Speed
CLASSIFICATION: Lloyd's Register
NAVAL ARCHITECTURE: Amels

EXTERIOR STYLING: Amels and Terence Disdale Design
INTERIOR DESIGN (refit): Luca Dini Design
GUESTS: 12
CREW: 13
BUILDER: Amels
YEAR: 2001; refitted 2009 and 2016-17