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[CREATIVE MINDS: HYDRO TEC]



Sergio Cutolo founded Hydro Tec in 1995. At first the studio concentrated on naval engineering, but today it offers integrated hull and exterior design services

“THIS IS MY WAY
TO CREATIVE
NAVAL
ARCHITECTURE”

Luigi Cusi

by Samuela Urbini



It took Sergio Cutolo quite some time to put his finger on the mission behind Hydro Tec, the studio he founded over 20 years ago and which today provides creative naval engineering and exterior design. A naval engineer by training, he spent a decade working in various yards, most notably Baglietto and Rodriquez, before hanging out the Hydro Tec shingle in 1995. For the first 10 years, the company focused exclusively on engineering but then, in 2004-2005, before the world economic crash hit, “we realised that engineering was the last link in the chain,” he explains. “So we began to go in the direction of integrated design complete with exterior styling and now 50 per cent of our output encompasses not just hulls but also exteriors.”

“Creative naval architecture is, however, common in both spheres. We use our technical knowledge to serve the project. When designers with something unusual in mind work with us, they find themselves dealing with people with first-hand design sensibility that are used to being creative because the technical

side demands a creative approach too.”

The engineer compares his work with architects of the likes of Calatrava and Gaudí both of whom were able to be bold in their designs and structural creations because they were so deeply versed in both the technical and aesthetic aspects of their work.

The studio’s original solutions are showcased in Aurelia, the first Flexplorer designed for Cantiere delle Marche. As her name suggests, she a flexible, versatile explorer that will allow her owners extend their cruising season. She also has a tender that extends her exploration potential. The 39-metre is clothed in classic explorer lines. The superstructure sits forward and there is a lot of free space aft. The aforementioned 8-metre tender is deployed using an A-Frame crane system which is borrowed from commercial shipping and tucks into the deck, leaving a vast area free. The bulwarks open out too and the result is an enormous 100 sqm beach club.

There is a sort of gallery between the two fuel tanks also which



Aurelia is a 39-metre concept by the Cantieri delle Marche. Described as a "flexplorer", the aft deck can be transformed into an infinite 100 square-metre beach club by using folding partitions (top). The tender is handled by an A-frame system with a retractable crane like those used on board commercial vessels





The latest concept presented by Hydro Tec is Crossbow, a 100-metre yacht with aluminium hull and superstructure. This high-performance superyacht has a sleek, sporty shape. The large open-air areas can be seen in the rendering above



makes all the main onboard plant easy to inspect and maintain – an unusual and very functional plus in a yacht of these dimensions. The steering system is electric rather than hydraulic too.

Space-wise, Aurelia has a quirky asymmetric saloon with just one corridor to port while the starboard side is taken up with a 3.5-metre long and 1.8-metre high picture window – a lovely, cosy observation point if cruising in chillier waters than the Mediterranean. As there is no stern garage, the transom area is used as a gym with six rectangular skylights drawing light in.

Hydro Tec's engineers will continue develop explorers as this is an area demanding increasing specialisation. That said, they also intend to work on fast semi-displacements in light alloy to meet market demand for increasingly efficient, low-fuel consumption craft. But of course, the studio's versatility and its ability to think freely and creatively continue to produce pilot projects also not least the 100-metre plumb-bowed hybrid, Crossbow.