

INVICTUS™

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*I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul*

William Ernest Henley



Time with... MATTEO PICCHIO



Architecture graduate turned lecturer, Matteo Picchio is now one of the few designers in Italy who works on the restoration of old boats.

Why is Milan important to you?

For a start it is my home, I was born here, I grew up here and now my business base is here. But it will always be special for me because I graduated from the faculty of architecture during the academic year of 1993/1994 at the Milan Polytechnic. I then went back to lecture there while undertaking research work in residential planning.

How do you think foreigners view Milan?

Milan has worked hard since the ending of the Second World War to become the design capital of Europe. It did that initially in industrial design, before moving onto furniture, now fashion and yachting have followed. It has built on its reputation and I think the world respects Milan for that. In my job I travel a great deal and often visit the USA. Americans love design, but when they talk about it they never use the words Italian design like some here do, instead Americans talk about Milanese design

Tell us about how you became involved in yachts?

As a kid I used to spend months at a time working on my father's boats in several yards and began hanging out with Cesare Sangermani at his shipyard. I learnt a great deal from him. Then while I was still studying I came across a magazine advertisement for 54' ketch designed to sail around the world. The owner had started but not completed the project and wanted to sell it on. My father helped me buy her and I stripped her completely and began to personally and patiently rebuild her in Liguria. So began my first experience in yacht rebuilding, which saw me take on the role of designer and project designer. It took two-years to complete, meaning I was two years late graduating as an architect, but it was the beginning of my now successful career as a designer specialist in yacht restoration.

Do you still practice in architecture?

In Italy we call all qualified and practiced professionals in the field of design architects, but if you're asking if I still work on buildings, the

answer is yes. Boats for me are the fun side of the business. Residential architecture is what I consider a more serious and demanding activity. I am fortunate to be good at both, but my preference is in yacht design.

What makes a good designer?

A good designer should be able to design a spoon or a great ship. I began by designing buildings in New York. It is the type of work anyone trained to do it can achieve. But to design yachts it is important to be at one with the sea and you need to then apply that passion in the creation of a really good boat. I have spent 19-years doing just that and now have a studio employing four staff plus one freelancer

Tell us about a restoration project you are proud of.

Just one? Seriously, they are all great but perhaps a favourite of mine is Marie Theresa, a tug boat built in 1960 that we converted into a yacht four years ago. She was launched in 1962 at the Savona Solimano Shipyard as Capo Caccia and in 1997 was purchased by a company in Monaco to be part of the fleet working in the harbour. A ship owner bought her with the intention of transforming her into a luxury yacht and came to me to oversee the project. I took her to Cantieri Navali di Sestri near Genoa to begin a complete refit. We commenced by sand blasting the steel to ascertain the vessel's true state, we measured the shims and removed the cumbersome towing eye. I redesigned the deckhouse, replacing it in light alloy and completely redesigned all of the interiors. We salvaged as much as we could of the original fittings for re-use, including the old bronze portholes and the windlass. The whole project was highly rewarding and I am happy to say the owner was delighted

What are you working on at the moment?

Currently we are refitting two powerboats and are designing a new 98' (30m) sailing boat for a previous client of ours, someone who wants to sail around the world. He has big plans to sell more of the same design by setting up a shipyard and selling the yachts at a good price.