

BOAT

International

REFIT SPECIAL:
HOW TWO RENOWNED
SUPERYACHTS GOT
THEIR NEW GROOVE

YOUR
ESSENTIAL
LUXURY
GIFT GUIDE



EXCLUSIVE

GO FOR GOLD

WHY RH'S FIRST FORAY INTO SUPERYACHTS LIKELY WON'T BE THE LAST

SCANDI MANIA

Fjords, falls, food... and many more reasons to explore Norway

OUT OF THIS WORLD

Vikal's 62ft former tender to *Octopus* is reborn as *MARSS*

OWNER'S FOCUS

"I've got a jet and I've got a helicopter... having a yacht is ten times better!"

CONTENTS



28
Tender touch: *Octopus's* former tender gets a new life after an extensive refit



48
Miami nice: the stylish South Florida city's art, food and fashion hotspots



54
Entrepreneur Alfie Best discovers the many pleasures of owning a superyacht



64
Discover how luxury furnishings brand RH put its stamp on a 128ft explorer



78
How adding a new beach club has now made *Lady E* even more family friendly



93
Wrap stars: our guide to the season's most memorable and luxurious gifts



106
The smart refit that transformed 230ft legendary charter yacht *Force Blue*



122
Head north to Norway for deep fjords, misty mountains and innovative cuisine

ON THE COVER

- 28** Out of this world: Vikal's 62ft former tender to *Octopus* is reborn as *MARSS*
- 54** Owner's focus: "I've got a jet and I've got a helicopter... having a yacht is ten times better!"
- 64** Go for gold: why RH's first foray into superyachts likely won't be the last
- 93** Your essential luxury gift guide
- 78** Refit special: how two renowned superyachts got their new groove
- 122** Scandi mania: fjords, falls, food... and many more reasons to explore Norway

ON BOARD

- 20** News: launches, concepts, business news and more
- 26** The Saint-Tropez Sundowners party
- 32** Revitalizing the fleet: refit roundup
- 36** Edit: the best e-bikes

BOAT LIFE

- 40** Photo finish: Tim Jefferies, owner of Hamiltons Gallery in London
- 42** The world's flattest watch
- 44** Buying gifts? Call the concierge
- 46** Aston Martin's go-anywhere SUV
- 47** Steinway hits the high notes
- 50** Edit: winter candles

OWNERS' CLUB

- 58** Superyacht skippers meet in Monaco at our Captains' Club reception
- 60** Members' Logbook
- 62** My Life in Boats: Hap Fauth

FEATURES

- 78** How charter favorite *Lady S* was transformed into *Lady E*
- 106** *Force Blue*: a 230ft legend is reborn

VOYAGE

- 128** Voyage news
- 129** Buy me an island: Great Guana Cay
- 130** Itinerary: the Philippines
- 132** Villa with a View: Costa Rica
- 134** Edit: the best Caribbean anchorages

THE BITTER END

- 144** An anonymous owner writes...

On the cover: 127ft *RH5*, photography courtesy of RH



THE POWER OF

When home-furnishings company RH decided to transform an explorer yacht in its image, it was a high-risk move. But, as CEO Gary Friedman tells Charlotte Hogarth-Jones, the gamble has paid off handsomely



Photography COURTESY OF RH

<#x#>

>>



RH Three's paint scheme makes a statement, with metallic Phantom Gray topped by metallic Champagne. Bottom: the sunset terrace on the top deck. Opposite page, top: the foredeck serves as an outdoor gym

W

hen it comes to retail, Gary Friedman knows a thing or two – particularly when it comes to selling luxury home furnishings. After dropping out of college at 18, the charismatic San Franciscan began his 47-year career stocking shelves at Gap. But his keen eye for detail and innate talent for sales propelled him to become the brand's youngest ever regional manager.

William Sonoma recruited him when he was 29 and he spent the next 13 years of his career helping grow that business's annual revenue from \$300 million to \$2.1 billion thanks in part to his introduction of novel and interactive experiences (demonstration kitchens, for example, and tasting bars), now found in department stores around the world.

In 2001, he left William Sonoma after being passed over for a promotion to CEO, and he invested several million dollars of his cash in the then-struggling chain Restoration Hardware, now known as RH, and became its CEO. Since then, he's been on a mission to elevate RH from a company





selling trinkets and \$2 card games to a global luxury brand. Today, it sells everything from marble entry tables to works of art priced at thousands of dollars. And the key to taking the brand further, he believes, doesn't lie in glossy billboards or prime-time Super Bowl slots, it's in a beautiful superyacht.

The company bought the 127ft explorer yacht *RH Three* in 2019 and firmly put the RH stamp on her during a refit in Florida. A calling card for the brand's design aesthetic and a way to gain the attention of a wealthy clientele, the yacht is also a charter vessel in her own right. She hits the market this season and will operate in the Bahamas in the winter and the Mediterranean in the summer. However, Friedman explains, it was a chance encounter that got things to this point.



The RH look and design philosophy are evident in the RH San Francisco showroom (top), and in the corporate Gulfstream jet *RH One* (left and below)



ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY: DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN; JOHN VOGLER

"Quite frankly, I'd been invited on many boats before by many very wealthy people, and I'd never been on one that I thought was beautifully designed," he says. "I always thought there was a lot of discord between the boat inside and out, and a lot of them looked too decorative, like Las Vegas."

A designer in Belgium who had spotted a yacht for sale called *RH3* got the ball rolling. "He emailed me and asked if it was the company yacht. I laughed and replied, 'I don't know anything about yachts; I'm not even very good at swimming!'" The designer's note, however, had piqued his interest, and he soon found himself flicking through the listing. "I said, 'Yeah, it looks like we could have [designed] that,'" he says.

Friedman kept tabs on the yacht, visited it with his design team in Sicily, and a year later presented the project to his board. Her good condition and fair price, he reasoned, meant they wouldn't have to invest much financially to make an impact, and, besides, "This wasn't one of those white plastic boats

you see in the harbor in Saint-Tropez, which are all the same. I liked that it was different."

Following the acquisition of *RH3*, which was renamed *RH Three*, renovations began in earnest, although much of the original structure and design remained untouched. Built in 2003 by Turkish yard RMK Marine to a design by Vripack, the yacht had already been blessed with a transformation thanks to a renovation by the esteemed Belgian architect Vincent Van Duysen in 2016. "He had taken this boat to a certain level in a way that was extraordinary," Friedman explains. "We didn't change any of the bathrooms, they were incredible. We didn't really change any of the staterooms apart from a bit of painting and new bedding, or the lighting either."

Besides, he's keen to point out, the yacht isn't a floating catalog of what can be bought in RH stores. Rather, she represents the essence of RH quality and good design.

There were, however, some major adjustments - starting with the yacht's exterior. Her hull was originally white and



Above: RH CEO Gary Friedman. Top: the company's "showboat" represents the essence of its quality and design sensibility

“This wasn’t one of those white plastic boats you see in the harbor in Saint-Tropez which are all the same. I liked that it was different”

gray, whereas today it’s a dark, metallic Phantom Gray with a champagne metallic above. It was a controversial decision. “Everyone told us you can’t paint the boat metallic, it’ll look bad, it’ll be too reflective,” Friedman remembers. “So we almost didn’t. And then right at the end, we said, ‘You know what, the planes are painted metallic [the company had previously designed two Gulfstream jets known as *RH One* and *RH Two*], and everyone told us that was a bad idea, and they look great.’ So, then we painted *RH Three* metallic, and now she’s the most beautiful boat in the harbor!”

Another move was changing the layout of the crew cabins and downsizing the yacht’s five guest cabins to four in the process. “I went down into the crew quarters and I was in shock at the space the crew was kept in. I mean, two people in a room that was maybe a meter wide with 70-centimeter-wide (2.3ft) bunks on top of each other? I can’t believe that’s much better than a prison cell; [I thought] it was crazy,” Friedman says. “Everyone said, ‘That’s just the way it is, don’t worry about that,’ and I said ‘Well, I do worry about that. We have a crew that we expect to give luxury service to our clients, but we’re not giving luxury service to them.’”

The crew then spent a week at RH’s California Center of Innovation and Product Leadership, advising designers on what they needed and felt was important in their space. One of the five guest bedrooms then became the captain’s room, while the captain’s room became a spacious twin cabin, replacing one of the two bunk rooms that previously was for the stewardesses.

The upper deck was also transformed, from a space that was half lounge, half gym, to a single area with a bar and lounge that extends outdoors, which entailed changing the white ceiling into a wooden one. Initial plans to place a Jacuzzi on the top deck were abandoned when the team realized how much it would cost in terms of stabilizing the boat. The planned Jacuzzi was replaced with a large fire pit and outdoor daybed to create a sunset terrace, while a new gym was created on the bow, with equipment stashed out of sight.

Inside the salon, a masculine palette of champagne lacquer, wire-brushed white oak, caramel Italian



RH Three's main salon is dressed in the same color scheme as the exterior

“It’s not the right time yet for us to do another superyacht, but it’s more likely in our future than not”



<#x#>

<#x#>



Beyond paint and linens, the guest cabins needed little work during the yacht's refit



Instead of a taking maximalist approach, the interior design relies on curated shelves and an extensive spirits bar taking center stage



leather and charcoal velvet mirrors the colors of the yacht's exterior, adding to the seamless effect of the design. And there's a less is more approach to styling, with items like individual photographs, carefully curated shelves and an extensive bar taking center stage.

Friedman has been on board lately to iron out any last-minute kinks. "I don't get any freebies," he says with a laugh. "I have to pay full price, and I've chartered the yacht three times now. One was last winter, and then I chartered this summer, one week in Saint-Tropez and one week in Ibiza."

Like many owners, he's enjoyed the intimacy of spending time with friends on board, while having plenty of private space to retreat to – not to mention the joy of a good night's sleep in the way that only a yacht can deliver.

It's a world away from the one Friedman was born into. He grew up "very poor," he says and he "barely saw a swimming pool" where he lived. "I thought rich people had color TVs, I never even knew about superyachts," he goes on, explaining that his father passed away when he was five years old, and his mother suffered from

bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. Throughout his childhood, he lived in “tiny apartments,” while “the most my mom ever earned in one year was \$5,000, and that was our best year.”

“I had no clue into design or luxury, I had no background,” he says; however, he thinks that gave him a unique perspective.

“When you come from outside of industries, you come at it with a lot more curiosity. Steve Jobs was never in the music industry, the cellphone industry, or the video camera industry, but he reinvented them and had a fresh view of them. If you think about the car industry, Elon Musk had never built a car before. How does the car industry, with all that capital, all the know-how, how could they not figure out electric cars? It’s because they’re trapped by what they know.”

Since *RH Three* has been out and about, she’s gathered her fair share of attention. The company has now had requests for yacht design from some of its biggest investors, as well as owners who have seen it on the move. With such a clear and fixed aesthetic, catering to the personal tastes of clients could be problematic, and Friedman agrees that the brand will be choosy about what it takes on. “We’re not going to do anything that doesn’t reflect our general design ethos,” he says.



“The brand will be choosy... We’re not going to do anything that doesn’t reflect our design ethos”



Above and below: the RH New York gallery showcases home furnishings over 90,000 square feet, plus a rooftop restaurant

According to Friedman, *RH Three* is already fully booked for the Caribbean season and has limited availability for next summer in the Mediterranean, having been swiftly snapped up by RH customers and experienced charterers alike. A sprinkling of stardust due to some “very influential people” booking time on board too, will no doubt have helped her reputation.

For now, other projects are vying for attention. Among them, RH Guesthouse in New York and RH England in the UK – a 73-acre estate in Oxfordshire with a 1615 manor house, built by legendary neo-classical architect John Soane, which will mark the company’s first big move into Europe.

Nonetheless, RH has already met with Feadship several times to discuss the possibility of designing a new yacht from scratch and has also been in talks with Vitruvius designer Philippe Briand about a potential collaboration. “It’s not the right time yet for us to do [another] superyacht, but it’s more likely in our future than not,” Friedman teases.

Of course, there’s a risk that another yacht project could prove to be somewhat of a “difficult second album,” but Friedman talks only of opportunities and the learnings that come from operating in unfamiliar territories and the joys of finding new ways around problems that the industry had previously thought insurmountable. And besides, he says, once RH takes on a project, it commits to it 100 percent. “Our expectation is only to do stuff that is really special.” ■

A 2016 refit by Vincent Van Duysen had already bestowed the en suites and cabins with the right aesthetic

