



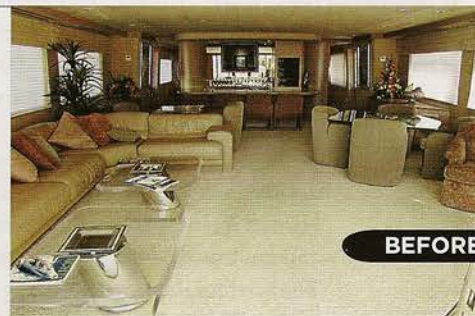
Were it not for the salt air, when stepping aboard the transformed *Serenity Now!*, you might feel as if you've just stepped into a swank New York apartment.

MAKEOVER ARTISTRY

Yacht owners undertake an interior refit to suit their needs **STORY BY JILL BOBROW**

WHEN YOU STEP into the salon of *Serenity Now!* (a "Seinfeld" reference), for all you know, you could be walking through the door of a swank apartment on New York's Upper East Side. Chocolate-stained cherry paneling, smooth and unfettered by bevels or raised panels, provides a strong accent to the café au lait tones in the carpet and a beautiful contrast to the two frothy-white sofas and light-colored drapes that are hidden away with the push of a button. The loose museum-collected furniture includes two chocolate-brown Swan chairs, a pony-skin upholstered Le Corbusier chaise lounge and a dining table for eight with Cab chairs. Trendy lighting by David Weeks and Ingo Maurer lends a transcendent glow to the nighttime ambiance for dining, dancing or cocktails at the Carrera marble bar. The only Caribbean colors in the space are contained in an oblong Nambé dish on the coffee table filled with M&M's chocolate candies.

The yacht's completely renovated aft deck, aka "Nikki Beach," is meant to feel like an extension of the salon »



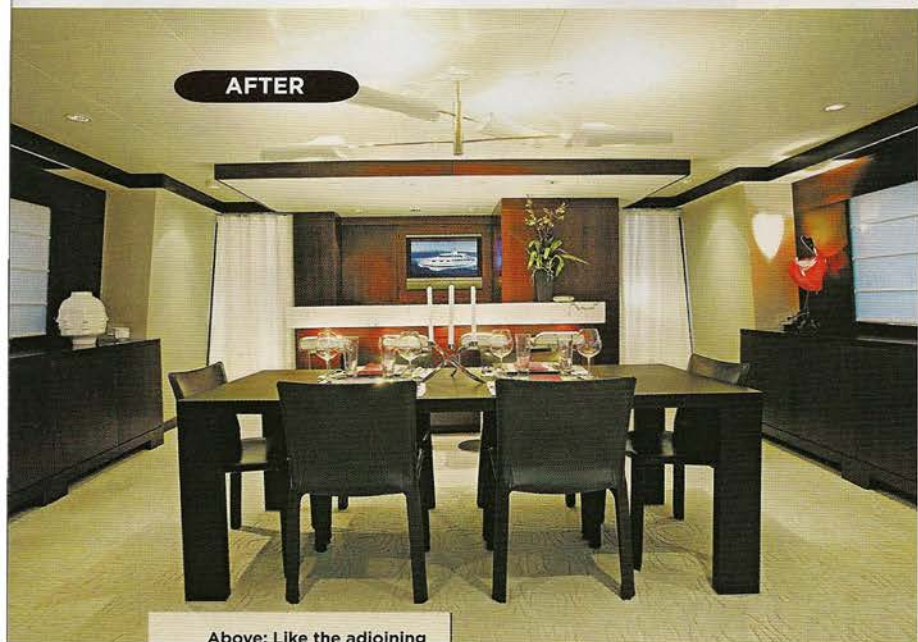
SPECIFICATIONS

BUILDER: Westship
INTERIOR DESIGN: Owner/
 Carol Williamson & Associates
LOA: 96'3" (29.35 m)
BEAM: 24'0" (7.32 m)
DRAFT: 6'0" (1.83 m)
POWER: 2x 1,000-hp
 Caterpillar 3412
SPEED: 12-15 kn
ACCOMMODATIONS:
 3 staterooms

BEFORE



AFTER



Above: Like the adjoining salon, the dining area saw a transformation from limed oak to dark-stained cherry. Right: The bar area sports a new look and feel, with ambient lighting, dark paneling and stylish stools.

with an oversized, cream-colored L-shaped sofa, a cherry-stained cocktail table that raises and slides in for all-day dining, and seating for 10 with Bellini chairs. Pull down the unique sunshades and you'll feel and look cool.

Serenity Now!'s interior and exterior details certainly do not look yacht-y, and that is exactly the way her owners wanted it. Inexperienced in owning big yachts, Jill Lenhart and her husband decided they would rather buy than build. The brief for their dreamboat specified an ocean-going vessel in the 70- to 100-foot range with an airy salon and no built-ins, a country kitchen-style galley, three bedrooms with walkaround beds and ensuite bathrooms, an open flybridge with a 360-degree view and, needless to say, a price that was right.

The couple share a love for architecture and design and have plenty of experience renovating homes, so they prepared to do the same with their boat. They were under no illusion that someone else's boat would be a perfect match for their tastes. Their search ended with *Tabiti*, a 96-foot

Westship motor yacht built in 1991 that had the bones of what they were looking for.

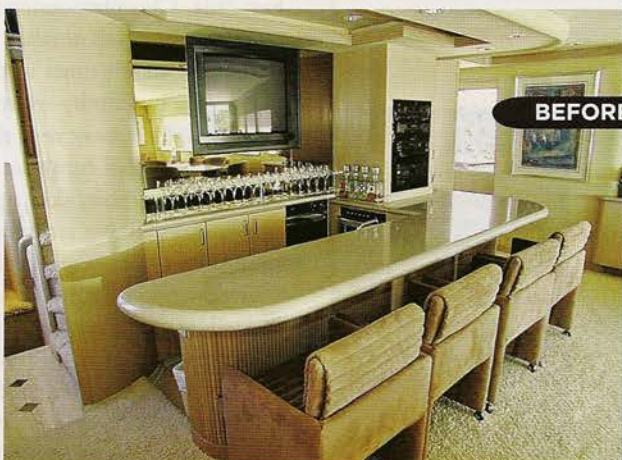
The boat was the right size, and the large picture windows afforded unobstructed views in the galley and salon. Another plus was the absence of built-in furniture. The sleeping accommodations were the right configuration, and there was a spacious open flybridge for the amazing year-round Caribbean views and weather. The yacht's core was intact, but the décor was decidedly not to their taste. "I don't want my grandfather's boat," Lenhart's husband told her.

The couple prepared for a major facelift and a gut-rehab. After checking with a few of the larger refit yards, they >

AFTER



BEFORE





AFTER



BEFORE

Above: The new open galley has a family-friendly island loaded with stowage space. Below: The new bar area on the flybridge is much more conducive to entertaining and casual family dining.

were dismayed to find that most were backlogged and couldn't fit in their refit. Not wanting to postpone the project, their captain made some calls to vendors, which eventually led them down the path of "general contracting."

Lenhart took the lead in the process. "I kept pushing one of the vendors to give me the name of a refit interior specialist," she says. "Finally he shared with me, behind closed doors, his favorite interior artisan."

Winfield Austin owns Windward Associates, a relatively small company with a main shop in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and satellite shops located in Jacksonville, Florida; Savannah, Georgia; San Diego, California; Seattle, Washington; and Bequia, St. Vincent. Austin specializes in yacht interiors,

residential interiors, fine cabinetry, studio furniture and project management. Lenhart met Austin and liked him right away. She felt relaxed that he, in coordination with her captain, would make it all happen the way she wanted it to.

Lenhart and her husband have been renovating, building and designing spaces for more than 10 years. As much as they love the design phase of projects, Lenhart says, they end up frustrated by the process mostly because the trades never live up to their expectations and they are left to micromanage the process.

"Winfield Austin is ethical, meticulous and a pleasure to work with," Lenhart says. "If it weren't for Winfield as our master craftsman and interior [general contractor], our yacht renovation would have been a nightmare."

"Lenhart and her husband did not want to go with classic boat features," recalls Austin. "They wanted the boat to be reminiscent of the style in their homes."

The couple wanted squared-off edges, not rounded ones. They wanted a look that was clean, crisp, minimal and contemporary.

The galley and salon were completely gutted and redesigned. For starters, »



AFTER



BEFORE

Philip Bennett (top right)



AFTER

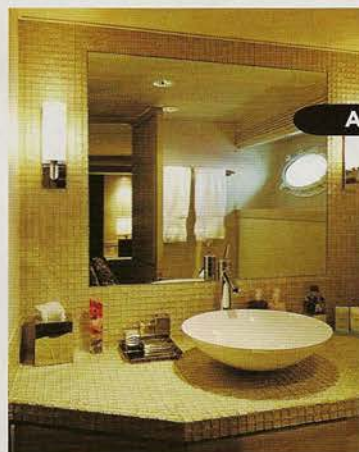


BEFORE

Top: Asian accents updated the old-fashioned master.

The rehab included adding a desk and comfortable chairs.

Right: The new his-and-hers master bath has a Jacuzzi and two showerheads.



AFTER



Austin removed the limed-oak paneling throughout and replaced it all with dark-stained cherry. In the galley, he built an oversized island, seven feet by four feet, to support their lifestyle and storage needs.

They wanted a large open galley that would accommodate cooking lessons and be roomy enough for family, crew and children. Galley storage space was expanded using found nooks and crannies. One side of the new island is set aside for storage. The other side has stools and a place to eat. There is a dinette forward for additional family-style meals.

Another favorite venue for casual eating and hanging out is the new bar area on the flybridge with its four unattached Bombo stools that swivel and lower. Similar to the aft deck, they designed a custom marble table that moves, raises and lowers for anytime dining or cocktailing that includes

seating for 10 with another sofa and Bellini chairs. While under way, guests may meander back to the sun deck's four lounge chairs.

All the old-fashioned staterooms and bathrooms were updated with a "spa" and "Asian" influence. But the master had a major transformation. A new marble-clad his-and-hers bathroom with a Jacuzzi and two showerheads was installed. The marbled headboard of the previous master was replaced with fabric and ebonized cherry. Also a settee to starboard was replaced with two cushion-type lounge chairs and a desk area for the owner to monitor the financial world in comfort.

Serenity Now! befits her name. She is edgy, but ultimately tranquil. Contact **Windward Associates** at 954-336-8085 or woodgod@bellsouth.net, www.windwardassociates.net. For charter, contact **Matthew Emerson** at **Camper & Nicholson's International** at 954-462-1462 or me@ftl.cnyachts.com. ☐