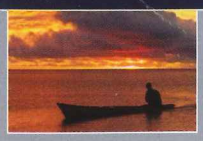
BLAZING A TRAIL
Christina G cruises through Indonesia's Ring of Fire



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Avantika II

Axantha II

A SLIGHTLY LONGER VERSION OF THE OWNER'S PREVIOUS YACHT, VRIPACK AND JFA HAVE CREATED A TOUGH YET COMFORTABLE EXPLORER YACHT, CAPABLE OF CRUISING TO THE FAR CORNERS OF THE GLOBE

words: Claus Reissig
photography: Bill Muncke; Benoit Stichelbaut

The owner paid special attention to the layout of the bridge. He felt it was important for the crew to feel comfortable as they would be spending several months on board at a time

The customers who come to boatbuilder JFA in the small French town of Concarneau on the Atlantic Coast are mostly experienced owners. Those who live on the coast here know how rough the seas can be and what technology owners should consider when setting off on long voyages, and the yard is renowned for its high quality construction.

The owner of the recently launched 43 metre *Axantha II* had already travelled extensively in a smaller explorer yacht, built by JFA in 2001. He liked her so much that he commissioned a slightly bigger version with only a few minor changes. Quite a compliment to the yard.

The build went smoothly, partly because many key details remained the same, including the deck forward of the superstructure and the fit-out in stained cherry wood. *Axantha II* needed to be able to undertake long voyages, so naval architects Vripack resisted the temptation to incorporate new technology that hadn't been proven over long distances.

Anyone who has ever tried to repair complex technical installations in remote places knows why this is important. Getting hold of spare parts is a complicated business that can often take a considerable time, particularly for specialist parts.

First impressions of the exterior of the aluminium ship are that she looks more like a friendly fishing trawler than a yacht. A bulb below the waterline has been omitted in favour of a clean, sharp stem. Yard manager Frédéric Jaouen likes this borrowing from the past.

Axantha II has also been given a funnel for more than just aesthetic reasons. While the chimney stack on her predecessor was used for stowage, this one acts as a practical exit from the bridge on to the upper deck which has a companionway to the bridge roof forward.

For *Axantha II's* interiors, the emphasis is on high quality and tradition. The main saloon, like the rest of the accommodation, is fitted out in stained cherry wood with classic detailing

The owner paid special attention to the layout of the bridge, with a centrally positioned pilot's seat, large corner navigation station and corner seating group. He felt it was important for the crew to feel comfortable as they would be spending several months on board at a time. Safety was also at the top of his list of requirements. There are no windows in the front of the superstructure, apart from those on the bridge level, to protect against big seas.

The captain has been given a spacious cabin on the upper deck, half a level below the bridge, so that he is close at hand if needed. The crew of up to eight have relatively generous quarters in the bow section from which they have direct access to the forward work deck with the anchor windlasses, 1,200 kilogram crane and tenders.

The signs of a well-built hull are plain to see. The ship was built entirely in aluminium. Although this is more expensive than steel, its lower weight means smaller

engines can be used, thereby reducing fuel consumption and the size of the fuel tanks, making the ship lighter. In fact, the yard managed to undercut the target weight of 305 tonnes by 14 tonnes.

With the twin 750hp engines the objective was for the ship to cover a distance of 4,500 nautical miles transatlantic at a speed of 11 knots. Now that the yacht is finished, the yard says she could make 6,700 nautical miles at 11.4 knots between fuel stops.

Great attention was paid to ensure very little movement and low noise levels in the owner's quarters. For this reason the suite is situated not on the upper deck but as close as possible to the centre of the ship, immediately forward of the engine room. Dutch noise specialist Van Cappellen was commissioned to take care of the noise insulation. The aim was to keep the level below 51dB in the owner's cabin at cruising speed. The living quarters, comprising all three decks, are mounted on rubber blocks

The living quarters, comprising all three decks, are mounted on rubber blocks in the hull to uncouple them from all noise and vibration. The results are superb

in the hull to uncouple them from all noise and vibration. The results are superb. Under way, the loudest sound in the guest cabins is the air-conditioning, while in the owner's cabin you are aware of only a distant humming, and noise levels here come in at an impressive 46dB.

The bathroom and dressing room between the owner's suite and the bulkhead of the engine room also help to deaden the noise. It is hard to believe you are so close to the engines.

As for the engine room itself, the twin Cummins diesels are almost lost in the vast space, and are hidden behind the large cooling system which lowers the temperature of the intake air.

To reduce the noise level at the cooling air vents on deck, a slight overpressure is created via the air-conditioning unit so that the heated air is forced upwards without extra fans. There is no need to pump large volumes of air through the spaces: sensors effectively regulate the necessary intake and exhaust air.

On deck, the loudest noise comes from the exhaust pipes that emerge just above the waterline. The engineers did consider giving the yacht an underwater exhaust, but rejected the idea due to its technical complexity.

Provisions are brought on board via the small bathing platform on the transom and straight into refrigeration by the shortest route. Only supplies needed immediately are brought into the galley.

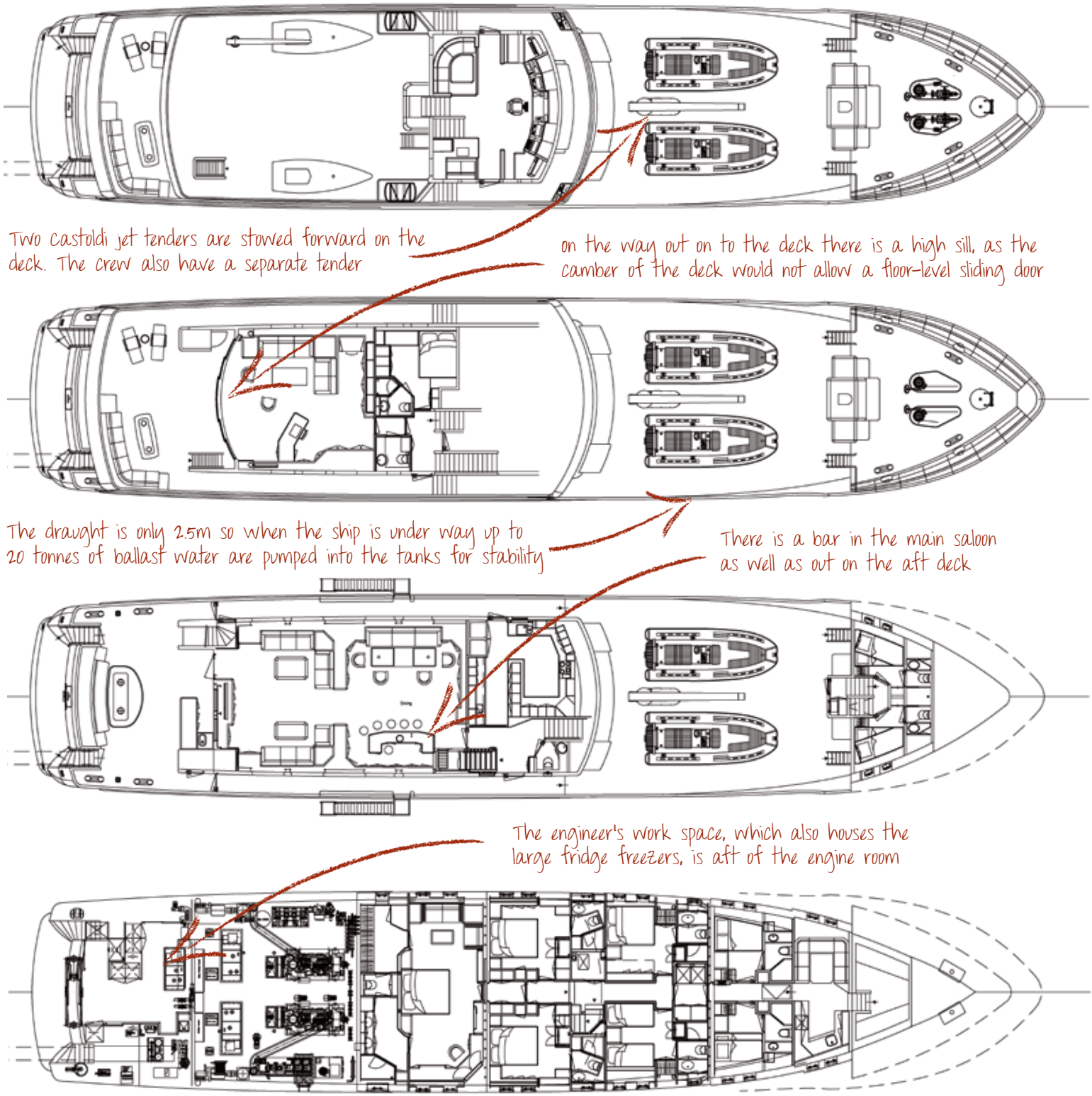
Cables run beneath the bridge in a shallow space in which the whole electrical system can be maintained centrally. There is another service area below the guest cabins where the ship's hydraulics can be inspected.

The layout of *Axantha II* is very much designed to preserve the privacy of the owner and guests. The 65 square metre main saloon leads out on to the deck. You will not find an imposing stairway, or even a spa pool.

Both the saloon and the aft deck have a built-in bar. The galley, also on the main deck, is of generous proportions, and has its own windows and a door to the outside deck.

The upper deck has a saloon with library and corner seating group. Sections of the large glass door on to the outside deck slide open at the touch of a button.

And the first *Axantha*? She has already been sold for a very good price and is cruising around Polynesia. According to JFA, the deciding factor was her excellent engineering. Anyone who has seen the new yacht will find this easy to believe.



AXANTHA II *JFA Yachts*

LOA 43m
LWL 38.8m
Beam 8.75m
Draught 2.5m
Displacement 305 tonnes (half load)
Engines
2 x Cummins QSK 19M;
each 750hp at 1,800rpm.
Gearbox MGX 5222 DC with reduction ratio 4.03/1
Speed (cruise)
12.5 knots
Range at 11 knots
6,700nm
Bowthrusters
Cramm 125 HP
Generators 2 x main Onan 80kW/50 Hz; 1 night genset Onan 50kW/50Hz
Fuel capacity
66,160 litres
Freshwater capacity
15,100 litres
Owner and guests 11
Crew 8
Construction aluminium
Classification
BV Unrestricted and MCA LY2 compliant
Naval architect
Vripack
Exterior styling
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