

# The Superyacht

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# REPORT

## ANTARES III

A 30m composite sloop, built for an experienced owner, launches in under 400 days.

*Page 96*

## SUPER SAILING

A look at the increasing number of regattas attracting owners with excitement and competition.

*Page 102*

## TENDERS & TOYS

Adding another dimension of enjoyment to owning or chartering a superyacht: a mix of the best.

*Page 121*

FORMERLY

**THE YACHT**  
report

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# Axantha II

Delivering a second yacht to a repeat owner can be a thoroughly rewarding experience for a shipyard. Just ask Frédéric Jaouen of JFA, whose family-run business in Concarneau, Brittany, has just delivered *Axantha II*, a 43m explorer yacht designed by Vripack. **Don Hoyt Gorman** reports.

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Nestled into the harbour behind Ville Close, the island-based fort-town at the heart of lovely Concarneau in Brittany, France, is the family-run shipyard JFA. Started in 1993 by Frédéric Jaouen with his associate Frédéric Breuilly, the operation today includes Jaouen’s sister Brigitte, who runs the administration and accounts departments, and Michel Siou, project manager. It is a family business in the true sense: an enterprise that in spirit and fact extols the passion and virtues of a unified, dedicated team focused on excellence.

Outside JFA’s yard on their private pontoon dock, the distinctive lines of a Vripack explorer yacht were visible from the parapets of the walled town. On first look, the yacht differs from her predecessor, *Axantha*, only in the colour of her hull (a dark grey rather than flag blue – both Awlgrip) and the girth of the foremast on the foc’sle. She has the same lines, including the well deck that holds two ribs. She is larger than her predecessor (43m in length compared with 37.2m, with an 8.75m beam, up from 8.2m), with the extra room allotted throughout the vessel.



As we threw off the docklines heading for the picturesque Glénans Archipelago, Frédéric Jaouen commented that the project had been a very happy one for the yard. “For us, this is a fantastic project. The owner returned to us to deliver an updated, larger version of his first beloved *Axantha*, which we built with Vripack’s engineering and design. The same owner, build captain, project manager, designer and yard meant that the owner was pleased with his first one and had confidence in our ability to deliver. Yes, this is a happy story for sure!”

The yard was able to realise some cost savings on this project through decreased engineering hours and increased efficiencies, and the reliable relationship between project manager Siou and the owner’s representative – both of who worked together on the first *Axantha*. Gaël Douguet from JFA’s commercial department, who was a font of knowledge and enthusiasm, explained: “Working with the same team, owner’s rep, architect, shipyard, and suppliers permitted us to go right to the goal,” he said. “Everybody had examples of the first *Axantha* in mind, so were comfortable with the configuration of the layout and the equipment. Building a second yacht on the same philosophy and layout allowed us to quickly validate technical choices, including brands of equipment.”

The two boats are not replicas, but are similar in layout and ambitions, and inspired by the same philosophy, which meant there were still significant challenges for JFA in the engineering of the yacht. “The larger size of this yacht (changes in length, width, weight, power) meant we were dealing with some important changes in overall structure, piping, inside layout drawings, watertight doors and regulations, and the engine room. This wasn’t a simple scale change at all – even though we occasionally puzzled at the realisation that this felt like an easier project than it actually was!”

Underway, the attention to detail in Vripack’s naval architecture and JFA’s engineering and build becomes evident: this is a quiet, smooth and

seaworthy vessel. Though Biscay was relatively calm during the day’s trials, *Axantha II* motored with the kind of easy grace one should expect from precision-made luxury vessels.

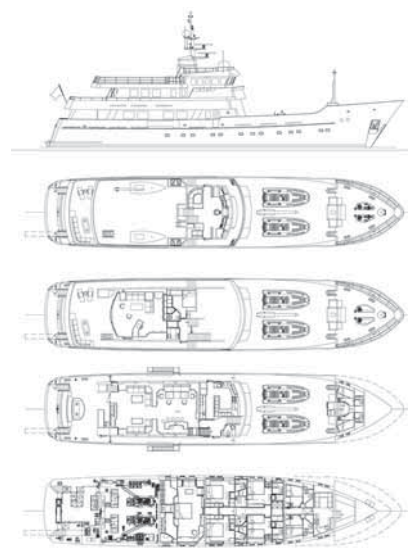
And the interior design – overseen by the owner – speaks volumes about the ideals of explorer vessels. She’s built for the owner and guests, who have the entire aft section of the vessel, with privacy a priority. The crew live and work forward – a key reason why *Axantha II* features a well-deck for launching the tenders amidships rather than from the lazarette or from an aft deck.



The owner’s sky lounge is designed as an office and library, featuring desks and a bookshelf stacked with books that extol the adventurer’s spirit. Curved sliding doors open to nearly the full breadth of the superstructure at this level onto the sundeck. With flecked dark granite countertops and stainless finish throughout, the spacious galley easily enables catering parties aboard. Aft of the galley is the dining and bar area and main salon. Inlaid into the deck between the dining and living area is a symbol of appreciation for an owner: a marquetry compass rose, hand-made by the captain of the original *Axantha*, who recently retired after years of dedicated service.

The owner’s cabin has a large fire- and water-proof door, which required a 4cm gap in the floor, bulwarks and overhead to allow for it to slide into place from the bulwark to port. It’s the only unsightly feature in a yacht that manages to combine elegance and a humble sensibility throughout. The owner’s stateroom is just forward of the engine room; and with the aid of meticulously tested acoustics is still very quiet while underway – during the trials, readings were being taken by Sandor Matla, project manager with the sound and vibration consultants Van Cappellen. With its own door forward of the watertight door, and two further closet-type storage areas between, the stateroom feels cosy but private, and very comfortable indeed.

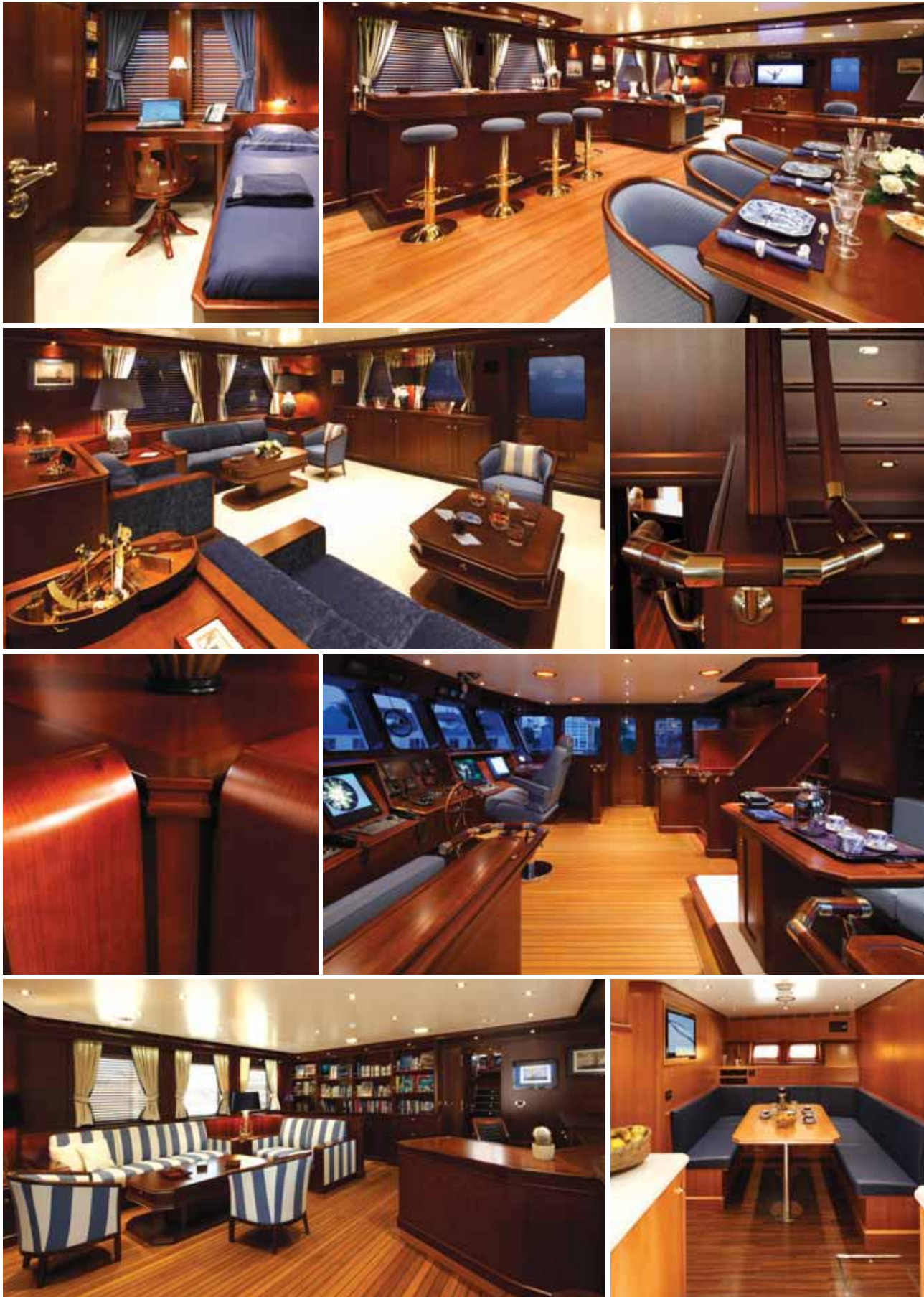
The engine room has wide walkways, a lofty overhead and easy access to >>

## AXANTHA II SHORT SPECIFICATION



Builder: JFA
LOA: 43m/141ft
LWL: 38.8/127.3ft
Beam: 8.75m/28.7ft
Draught: 2.5m/8.2ft
Engines: 2 x Cummins QSK 19M – 560kW @ 1,800rpm
Hull & superstructure: Aluminium
Displacement: 305T @ half-load
Naval architect: Vripack
Exterior styling: Vripack
Interior styling: Vripack
Flag & classification: Madeira flag, Bureau Veritas  Hull and  Mach Unrestricted
Compliance: MCA LY2
Owner & guest capacity: 11 persons
Crew capacity: 8 persons





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CAPTAIN'S CABIN, MAIN SALON, STAIRCASE DETAIL, WHEELHOUSE, CREW MESS, UPPER-DECK SALON, DETAIL & MAIN SALON

the twin Cummins QSK 19M that offer 560kW at 1,800rpm. *Axantha II* can reach speeds of 14.8 knots. With 66,160 litres of fuel held in four tanks, the vessel can run one genset 24 hours a day, and cruise at 12 knots, for over 5,500 nautical miles. Treated fuel can be held in a 2,000-litre settling tank and her 1,000-litre day tank enables 12 hours of operation while cruising at 12 knots. The HEM watermaker has a capacity of 1,200 litres per hour. To reduce noise, the engine room is cooled with a system that uses insulated seawater lines that feed into a plate heat exchanger cooling a freshwater recirculation system.

In comparison to many yachts where large ventilation systems feed and cool the engines, the water-cooling system aboard *Axantha II* has reduced ventilation grills, and delivers less salted air to the engine room. The main engine exhaust system separates water below and gas above the waterline, an engineering choice that Siou explained as ‘KISS’ – keep it simple, stupid. There is a pump room beneath the crew areas forward, accessible as a crawspace that enables further ease of access for the crew to reach core components of the vessel’s systems. Much better than other ‘pump rooms’ that are reachable with a forearm and a flashlight held in the teeth.

The boatdeck is perfect for sunning and is the launch point for the two small sailboats stowed there. The flybridge is just a few feet below the level of the dual furuno radar units, and between the satcom domes, so it’s mostly a utilitarian rather than a designed-use space – though it was the ideal vantage point from which to observe Siou’s steering of *Axantha II* back into Concarneau’s narrow harbour passage, past the small sailboats moored to shore, and onto JFA’s pontoon.

JFA’s work on assembling the plumbing, piping, the stainless railings and all the interior furniture appears flawless. The design is conservatively luxurious, but rich with a sort of understated elegance and clear, simple usability.

This boat, a true exploration vessel, was also designed to keep crew happy and enable them to do their jobs very well. A happy crew means a long-serving crew, and the ability for the owner and his guests to truly explore. ■

**Images: JFA, B Muncke & B Stichelbaut**

**To comment on this article, email [issue126@synfo.com](mailto:issue126@synfo.com) with subject: *Axantha II***



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