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Volume XX Number 1
March 2002

INTERNATIONAL

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Majestic Transformation

The reconfiguration of the schooner *Orejona* gave this beloved yacht a new name and a second chance at life.

THE DILEMMA FOR OWNERS FACED with the problem of what to do with a yacht that is much admired but for many reasons no longer viable is double edged. Many probably would elect to put their money into a yacht from the brokerage market or to build a bigger custom design.

Such a problem faced the European owner of the schooner *Orejona*. The yacht no longer fit the size demands of his family, yet he was unwilling to be without a yacht for the extended period of time that a new build would take. Underscoring the difficulty of his decision was his genuine affection for the yacht and his happy memories of time spent on board. In the end, his love for the yacht settled the matter. His solution was to commission the French yard JFA at Concarneau in southwest Brittany to undertake a major rebuild. Out of *Orejona* came *Magistral*, a new yacht smugly and elegantly emulating the qualities reflected in her new name.

This major conversion, directed by La Rochelle-based naval architects Jean Berret and Olivier Racoupeau, involved lengthening the hull by two meters and refitting the entire interior. Oliver Stirling of London's Andrew

Winch Designs worked closely with JFA and Berret-Racoupeau to re-plan the entire yacht.

The client's brief was to create an open, double-height pilothouse and salon, review traffic flow inside, reorganize the luxury



accommodation aft, and refit the crew areas forward. It was important for the client that although the interior was to be comprehensively rearranged and completely replaced, the character of the original vessel should be retained.

JFA, the relatively young association of Jacques Vergoz and Frederic Jaouen, began in March of 1993. Since then the yard has launched several excellent and well-known designs, including *Amadeus*, a 110-foot cutter, a 91-foot sloop by Phillippe Briand, and several smaller aluminum vessels. "It [could be] hard to imagine this quality of work going on here in Concarneau. We are a bit out of the mainstream for this type of work," said Jaouen, nodding toward the vast fleet of large commercial fishing vessels in for repair in the adjacent yard.

Magistral's new interior retains the varnished flat paneling and painted, beamed overheads of *Orejona*, together with many of the yacht's original brass fittings. Several woods, including walnut and cherry, were considered for the project, but teak was eventually selected and used throughout *Magistral*.

The original layout included a small wheelhouse and separate lower salon. By extending the wheelhouse forward, the design team established a connection to the lower salon

coachroof to create a new open-plan living area with spectacular window views. The new split-level deck and lower levels incorporate the full-beam lower salon and dining area for up to 10 with a staff door in the forward bulkhead to give access to the fully refitted galley and crew areas forward.

The upper pilothouse includes a bar and navigation station to port. A large expanse of oiled teak deck separating the raised seating area to starboard provides a sensible and workmanlike surface for this main artery and provides panoramic views. Comfortable seating affords protected dining for up to 12 around large teak tables that can be joined for even larger numbers.

Access to the sunroof atop the pilothouse



The original small wheelhouse was transformed into an expansive deck salon encompassing a bar, settee and dining for 12. Below, the lower salon gives access to reconfigured guest accommodations.



PHOTOS BY BILL MUNCKE

is by ladder and hatchway with an additional reclining area provided on the teak-decked roof of the main salon. Thanks to deck storage boxes around the base of the foremast the superbly planked teak decks leading forward to the bowsprit are uncluttered and wide enough to entice guests forward. The helm position aft is sufficiently raised by the sheer height of the new deck structure, allowing reasonable views forward through the pilothouse windows. Immediately under this area, space gained in the reconstruction enabled a garage for personal watercraft and other equipment.

The main social areas of the yacht are connected via a short staircase that continues on down to the wide aft accommodation corridor

giving access to a spacious owner's suite to port and three guest suites.

A wider area in the companionway creates a lobby for the owner's suite opposite a twin guest cabin to starboard. This cabin is designed and colorfully embellished with children in mind. Two double guest suites farther aft benefit from the extra length added at this area in the hull.

With her deep royal blue hull and off white superstructure providing generous and comfortable accommodation for her five crew and up to eight guests, *Magistral* indeed has a new identity, while satisfying her owner's request to maintain her character.

— Jonathan Eastland