

Photographer: Massimo Listri

## How to Design the Lavish Interiors of Multimillion-Dollar Superyachts

**Italy's award-winning Achille Salvagni takes us through common problems of the seafaring set.**

By **Cator Sparks**

July 24, 2018, 1:17 AM EDT

If you've ever listened to an interior designer break down why and how they designed a room or undergone the design process yourself, you understand that it isn't all about paint colors and plush rugs. There are needs to be met, visions to be considered, and problems to be overcome.

Designing for a superyacht takes all of this to a whole other level: When was the last time your multimillion-dollar mansion pitched and rolled in the waves?

Achille Salvagni, an Italian designer known for his award-winning work on luxury residences both on land and in the water, takes us through the process on three of his seafaring projects: the 88-foot Azimut Grande 27 Metri; the Aurora, a 164-foot, \$27 million ship from Rossinavi; and the Numptia, an even bigger superyacht, also from Rossinavi. Salvagni works with magnificent materials including mahogany, rosewood, onyx, bronze, and gold, using skilled artisans to bring his designs to life—and overcome the limitations of the space in the most elegant way possible.

“I design from the shell of a building or boat and create everything from the wall to the ceiling to the door handles and hinges,” Salvagni says. “You can’t move walls in a yacht like you can in a home, so I have to create a comfortable environment in an uncomfortable, predesigned structure.”

He continues: “Each piece of furniture I create has a narrative. They are not just made to fulfill an order but are more a portrait of a single person or couple.”

Below, follow 11 common problems of designing interiors for yachts and how Salvagni solved for them.



### **Problem: You're living in a hunk of heavy machinery**

Because the ceiling is full of equipment, beams, and air-conditioning units, Salvagni took a sculptural approach to the *Azimut Grande 27* using wood with bronze inlay, lacquered fiberglass, and leather over fiberglass. "This design is closer to the approach of creating the interior of an airplane and is technical and lighter to install," he says.

Photographer: Paolo Petrignani



### **Problem: Rough Seas**

It's always a problem to deal with freestanding elements on a yacht. Salvagni says the key issues you have to work out with objects are lightness and stability, so for the *Azimut* he set out to design a table lamp that was part of the cabinet. "This 'growing lamp' evokes the softness of a natural growing branch while the branch connects the lamp to the cabinet, preventing it from sliding off," he says.



### **Problem: Low ceilings**

Dangling a chandelier over a dining table on a yacht is never the best idea, Salvagni says. "The swaying and stability are issues you do not want to contend with. Plus, the formal look of a chandelier is not a good fit for what should be a more casual environment." Beyond that, the standard ceiling height on a yacht is a mere 7 feet. So on the *Azimut*, Salvagni created a more fitting alternative with an organic lighting scheme reminiscent of sea coral or an anemone. Photographer: Paolo Petrignani

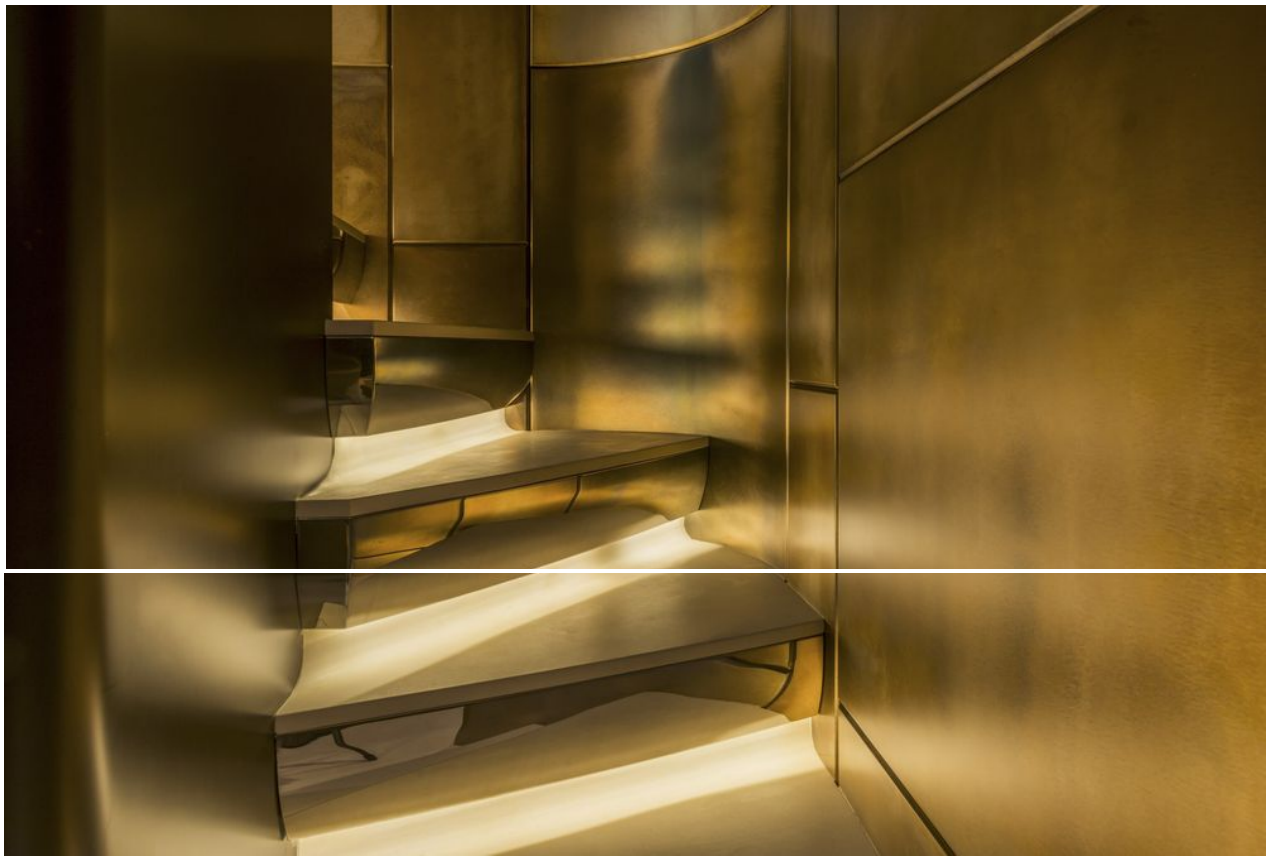




### **Problem: Minimal square footage**

Even the most spacious of yachts can still be cramped. "One issue on any boat is banging your foot or toe against the furniture," says Salvani, "so this nightstand has a free-floating design. It is integrated to the headboard, which wraps and bends to create volume." The designer goes further to explain that the "softness" and "floating" effects on the *Azimut* create a specific way to reference residential interior design. "This has the coziness and warmth designed for a bedroom but the design and function for a yacht."

Photographer: Paolo Pettrignani



### **Problem: Tight spaces**

With its ergonomic design, Salvagni says this staircase on the *Azimut* is more like one you may find on an airplane. "Curved wooden panels coated with a mix of nickel and silver are cut in large shapes to enlarge the space," he says. "While a typical yacht staircase would have wooden steps, we thought this metallic looking finish added more sophistication." Photographer: Paolo Petrignani



### **Problem: Limited storage**

There was no space for a typical buffet in the dining room of the Azimut, so Salvagni created an "organic element" to provide both storage and visual interest. "Having a cabinet in an organic shape in a room with limited space makes it easy for people to pass through," he says. "When you have a limit, turn it into a value."



### **Problem: Odd-shaped rooms**

When Salvagni was designing this bedroom on the *Aurora*, he was faced with having two slopes (caused by two large beams) interfering with where the cabinets were to be created. His solution: make two "wings" out of leather to add intentionality to the interruption. "From the two wings I curved the leather to create the tops of the cabinets and utilized elegant bronze details," he says.

Photographer: Paolo Pettrignani



**Problem: Channeling natural light**

Most skylights are square, says Salvagni, but on the *Aurora* all the openings are elliptical shapes. "We played a game with all the wooden elements, taking a very ordinary space and creating an important foyer," he says. "One can view this skylight from each level of the yacht."

Photographer: Paolo Petrignani







### **Problem: Visual clutter**

"It's always awful to have too many handles on everything, plus in a yacht you want more smooth surfaces," says Salvagni. As with the Azimut, space is still a premium even on the much-larger Aurora. "The closet door is very close to the edge of the bed, so we gave it more of a curtain effect, which hides all of the technical details and handles," he says. "The result is more of a sculpture than a locker."



### **Problem: No natural light**

Before becoming "one of the most attractive rooms on board" the 230-foot *Numptia*, says Salvagni, this space was a dark tunnel because of its lack of windows, connecting the main living area to the dining room, just through that metal door. His solution: cover sea urchin shells in bronze and dot them over the ceiling and walls as light fixtures. "It lends the most glamorous effect, a luminous quality," Salvagni says.

Photographer: Massimo Listri



### **Problem: Intrusive structural elements**

"Here we were presented with the problem of a huge column in the middle of the room," says Salvagni of the *Numptia*'s master bedroom, "so instead of hiding it, we highlighted it by wrapping it with brushed teak and having it melt into the ceiling." The result is almost treelike, and by wrapping the rest of the room in teak, it unifies the space in a softness, according to the designer.

Photographer: Massimo Listri