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# Family affair

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*Bilgin's 46.8m Giaola-Lu is the first custom yacht for a multi-generational family who know how to enjoy life. By Risa Merl*

**T**hey say a family that plays together stays together. If this is true, then a family who builds a yacht together – a process that is creatively fulfilling, often challenging, yet always rewarding – well, they should surely be bonded for life.

The new 46.8m Bilgin *Giaola-Lu* is the first custom build for her owners, two Mexican brothers and their sizeable brood. On the frequent occasions the owners would visit the Turkish yard or the yacht's designers in London, it wasn't uncommon for three generations of family members to show up en masse. This isn't a yacht built by an individual, but a collaboration designed to meet the needs of all who would enjoy her – a family yacht in the truest sense of the word.

"We always worked directly with the owners and their family and met them on many occasions at our office and the shipyard," says Jonny Horsfield of H2 Yacht Design, which was responsible for *Giaola-Lu*'s exterior and interior, with Unique Yacht Design

providing the naval architecture. "They were actively involved and always very excited to see the new designs we had produced and the build progress."

For the exterior, the owners asked for something "modern and timeless", with references to current design trends, which is evident in *Giaola-Lu*'s plumb bow and defined lines. But of utmost importance wasn't how she looked but how she would be used. The brief for a family-centric yacht with a focus on entertaining took centre stage and impacted every part of the design, from the layout to the residential interior motif to the high-spec A/V equipment found throughout.

Planned to be cruised regularly and wholeheartedly by a large clan filling all 16 bunks, *Giaola-Lu* required a non-traditional layout to complement her high-capacity use. Beyond creating dual master cabins and flexible guest cabins, this challenged H2 to think creatively about the entire layout.

"We did away with the traditional main saloon, ►







Above and right: the owners wanted a “modern, clean and timeless” exterior with references to current design trends, evident in the plumb bow and defined lines. Below right: the deck areas are shaded with removable umbrellas from Tuuci and custom-designed shade sails



which is becoming a growing trend,” Horsfield notes. Instead of an impersonal, big saloon, the main deck hosts a cosy lounge and cinema, while the upper saloon has become the hub of entertaining. It seamlessly connects to the indoor-outdoor dining area and aft deck, creating an enormous playground on the bridge deck. *Giaola-Lu*’s upper saloon, with its curved walls, oversized furnishings and retractable sliding glass doors, feels more like an open-plan living room in a home that spills out onto a terrace than your typical upper deck second lounge. There is an L-shaped sofa, bar, games table and table seating for 12 with a Lazy Susan in the middle – the dining table being just one of the many pieces designed and made by Bilgin. The aft deck furnishings are comfortable and can be moved out of the way should a dance party break out. Sightlines carry fore to aft, the idea being, Horsfield says, that you could be perched on a sunbed and still watch the enormous TV in the upper saloon and feel part of the action no matter where you are. It’s easy to imagine the entire family enjoying themselves up here, sprawled out from sunloungers to sofa, bar to backgammon game.

As H2 created both *Giaola-Lu*’s exterior and interior, the studio was allowed complete freedom to approach the design holistically and consider how the inside and outside spaces would work in concert. It’s an approach that can benefit almost any yacht

project, of course, but it was especially key to these particular owners. “The clients were extremely keen to have a meaningful connection between the interior and exterior, in particular the aft lounges,” says Horsfield.

Guests are welcomed onto the main aft deck and into a covered outdoor lounge that’s closely connected to the saloon. Here they can sip a welcome drink and unwind – or enjoy the area’s other purpose, as a large TV swivels out from the wall, creating a TV viewing spot in the shade.

The A/V specification came from the owners, who were very particular about the equipment they wanted installed, with H2 advising on positioning for the speakers and TVs. Wandering through *Giaola-Lu*, you notice just how many televisions there are, although some are more obvious – such as the big screen in the main deck cinema – than perhaps the sets concealed by a mirror-finish in all the cabins.

It might seem a strange dichotomy, an owner who wants to nourish the connection to the outside and the sea yet who also stacks the boat with televisions and speakers, but this is all part of making her a family-friendly boat – it’s just as important for this family that they have plentiful options for watching their favourite shows or sports as it is to be able to dive into the water. The main deck owner’s office has a special curved TV that fits perfectly against the





*There is something abundantly liveable about this yacht.  
It's a grown-up boat, and nothing is overcomplicated  
or minimal for the sake of fashion*



*Giaola-Lu is designed to be used to her full 16 berth capacity most of the time and to meet the needs of all three generations of the extended family at once. On deck, her clear lines of sight from fore to aft add to the inclusive feeling but there are also private nooks for down-time*

concave wall, while the desk is by the window, faced by a comfortable sofa. Originally slated as a typical office and lobby to the main deck master, this room's use changed part way through the build when the owners made a special request to create a private enclave that could serve more than one purpose. Drop the blinds and the space transforms from a place of business with great views to a darkened mini-cinema or even a place for video games.

The large master carries forward stylistic cues from the main deck. Great attention was paid to the continuation of subtle details between the cabins and public spaces – one such being the Mondrian-inspired geometric pattern that is seen fully in the main lobby but pops up again in the guest accommodations. A hinged hull door in the suite gives the owners instant connection to the outdoor environment.

As there are two main owners, there needed to be an equivalent suite on the lower deck. This is found in the VIP, truly a second owner's suite with a full-beam bedroom and combined lounge. Suede creates interest as a detail in this space, as does the ornate fabric headboard. The TV is hidden within a mirror – just one of many skilfully employed reflective surfaces found on board. “The carefully planned use of mirrors around the yacht makes small spaces feel much bigger, and also plays well with the geometric surroundings they reflect,” says Horsfield. “This often leaves you thinking you are on a much bigger yacht.” But comfort on board isn't just an illusion granted by mirrors – quiet running was a priority for Bilgin, and noise levels in the lower deck master are only 45 decibels at her cruising speed.

*Giaola-Lu* will almost always cruise at full capacity. That means up to 16 family members and their fortunate friends spreading out over her fewer than 50 metres. To accommodate the various combinations of adults and children, the guest cabins were kept as flexible as possible. Each of the four cabins is convertible from twins to double berths, and each also has a Pullman to slip in that extra guest.

There is something abundantly liveable about this yacht. H2 skilfully met the owner's request for a residential style so they could feel more at home instead of tiptoeing around an overdone showpiece of a yacht. The interior is warm and inviting, with a beautiful crown-cut walnut dominating the finishing. H2 achieved the handsome yet cosy interior with a simple palette of warm-toned wenge, walnut, olive and teak for the floors and walls, all of which contrast harmoniously with lighter neutral fabrics on the ceilings and wall panels. A hint of colour shows itself on the furniture cushions. It's a grown-up boat, nothing overcomplicated or minimal for the sake of fashion. Sliding glass doors to port and starboard in the main deck saloon open up this space to the outdoors, making sure it is well lit when not in cinema mode.





The galley is built to feed a lot of people. It is as professional as they come, and has a sensible layout for plating and prep. Best of all for the crew is a large, picture-box window, which the chef says they find motivating when cooking. A dumbwaiter sends food from the galley to the upper saloon, where most family meals will be enjoyed.

As welcoming as the interiors are, it's the outdoors where the family really plans to let their hair down. With its use of loose furnishings, the sundeck is the ultimate entertaining space, designed for partying. This is where one of the owners' sons moulded the design. The state-of-the-art sound system was inspired by one of his favourite Mediterranean nightclubs – you can't miss the huge speakers. The top-end entertainment system allows this family boat to turn into a party yacht. A glass-fronted spa pool is forward, surrounded by sunbeds, while a shaded bar and lounge area is centre and there is al fresco dining and sunloungers aft. The bar stools were designed in-house by Bilgin and are worthy of note for being exceptionally comfortable, the backs designed to lean like an easy chair.

When someone needs a respite from the party action, they can wander down to the navigation lounge, set forward of the bridge. "It's a private place perfect during cruising and for sunsets," says

Horsfield. It's another one of the spots designed to foster that connection with the outdoors and to give family members a useful nook to nestle in to.

While *Giaola-Lu* is the first of her kind for Bilgin, the yard plans to use this hull form on other boats – hopefully taking her from custom to semi-custom territory should the right owner come along. According to Emrecan Özgün of Unique Yacht Design, the hull was designed with priority placed on comfort, stability and efficiency, aiming to make her 10 per cent more efficient than similar vessels in her class. Powered by twin 1,450hp C32 Caterpillar engines, she achieves nearly 16 knots and has a range of 5,000nm at 12 knots, making her capable of transatlantic cruising.

*Giaola-Lu* has already welcomed her owners and their happy clan on cruising adventures since her launch, and plans for many more are in the works. The biggest adventure, however, was working together to bring this yacht to fruition. "This was their first fully custom build, and we are pleased to report they thoroughly enjoyed the build process and are very proud of the finished project," says Horsfield. The family that will enjoy *Giaola-Lu* certainly knows how to play together – and now they can add boatbuilding to their list of favourite pastimes. ■



Above left: the main deck owner's office can serve as either a place of business with a desk that faces the window, or, with the blinds pulled down, a mini-cinema with a curved television that fits snug against the concave wall. Left: the interior is contemporary but cosy and homely, inspired by Scandinavian and high-end residential detailing. It features lighter neutral fabrics that set off the warm-toned wenge, walnut, olive and teak of the floors and walls. Above: sliding glass doors to port and starboard in the main saloon ensure it is well lit by natural light when not in cinema mode. Right: the Lazy Susan dining table is one of the yacht's many pieces designed and made by Bilgin

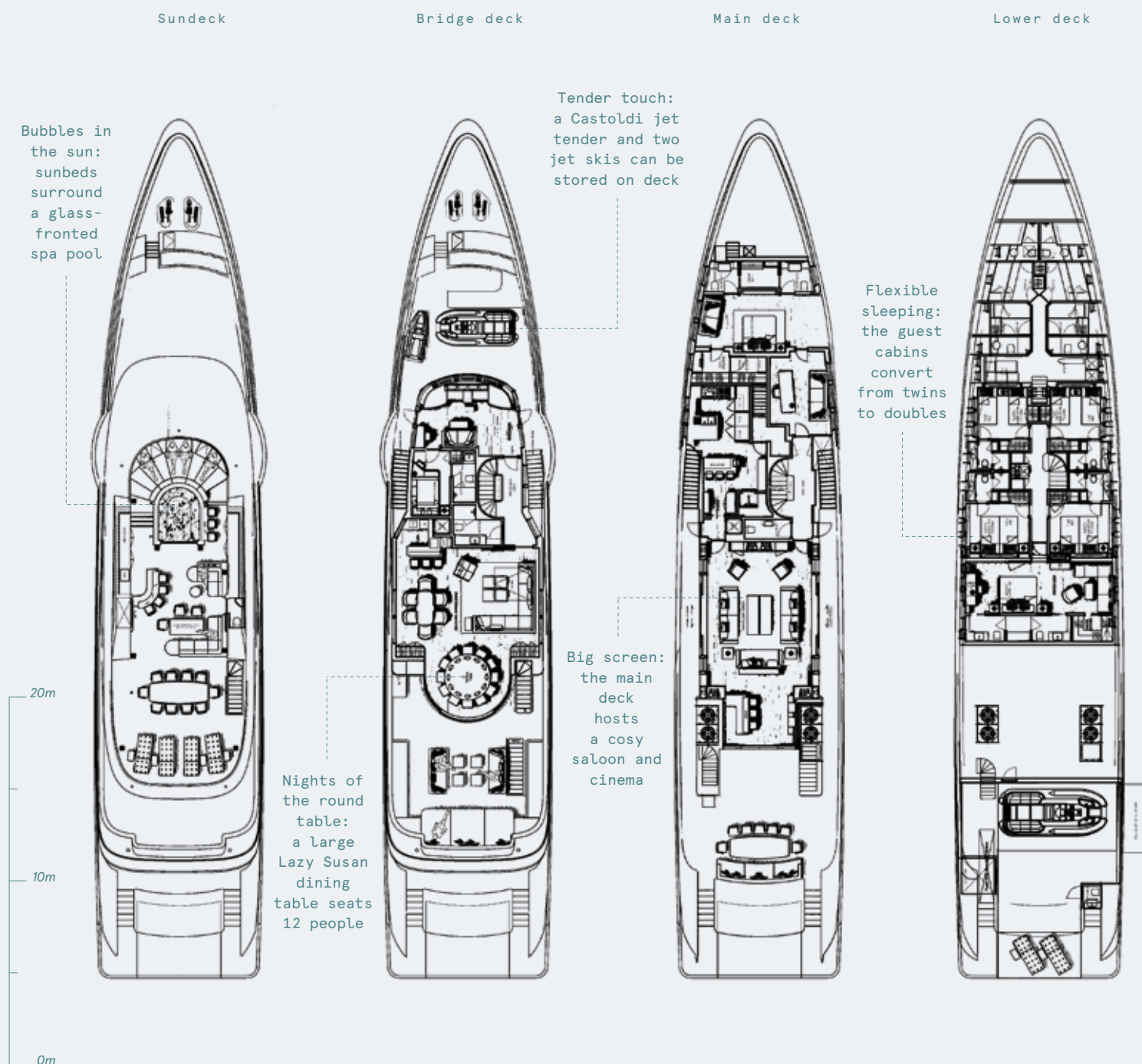




# S P E C S

GIAOLA-LU

BILGIN YACHTS



**LOA** 46.8m  
**LWL** 45.6m  
**Beam** 9.2m  
**Draught (full load)** 2.6m  
**Gross tonnage** 496GT  
**Engines**  
2 x 1,450hp  
Caterpillar C32

**Speed max/cruise**  
16/12 knots  
**Range at 12 knots**  
5,000nm  
**Generators**  
3 x Cat 4.4 86kW  
**Fuel capacity**  
67,300 litres

**Freshwater capacity**  
12,300 litres  
**Tenders**  
2 x Castoldi jet tender 15 and 21 LC  
**Owners/guests** 16  
**Crew** 10

**Construction** Steel hull; aluminium superstructure  
**Classification**  
RINA C \* HULL MACH, Y Unrestricted (LY3)

**Naval architecture**  
Unique Yacht Design & Naval Architecture  
**Exterior styling**  
H2 Yacht Design  
**Interior design**  
H2 Yacht Design

**Builder/year**  
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