

The One Man Brand

Where Harmony battles against Vulgarity

As a self-proclaimed journalist, interviewing and meeting incredible people is one of my favourite past times, and during the most recent Monaco Show I vibrated with excitement at the thought of meeting one of my heroes in the world of design, **Philippe Starck**.





THIS MAY SOUND EXCESSIVE, BUT I HAVE ADMIRER HIS approach to design and living for the past two decades and welcome his entry to the large-yacht world. While he is obviously incredibly talented and has branded many an iconic product with his name, he has only recently added his marque to the floating fleet. Following the appearance of the multi-tiered Friendship that sits proudly in Monaco Harbour, *Wedge 3*, he is currently integrating his style on some of the more discreet and unknown projects that are currently in build in Northern Europe. While many are aware of the projects, we respect the privacy and discretion and have decided to keep the reference to a minimum, but suffice to say they will be very special in true Starck style.

The reason for the brief liaison in Monaco was part of the PR machine for the new and recently reported Port Adriano on the island of Mallorca; not only is this a welcome addition to the berthing limitations, it is also a departure from the norm by focusing on the land space more than the dock space. Starck has been allowed to play with the shore-based environment and create a special illusion for the visiting yachtsmen and women. While we all accept that we desperately need more berths and homes for the vast villas of the sea, it strikes me that to create just blocks of concrete and bollards is both uninspiring and unimaginative when it comes to an environment that strongly relies on a positive state of mind and relaxation.

The conversation with Starck, while incredibly humbling, was reflective and lucid. He stares intensely at his subject, be it the interviewer or an image he refers to, in an almost three-dimensional laser scan; while initially you feel slightly invaded and uncomfortable, it is clear that it is unintentional. This is his purist demonstration of passion, his eyes slightly watering with emotion as he speaks. If you track his history or life, there is a wonderful story that many have already told; even Googling him provides unlimited resource on his achievements and abilities – therefore I will focus my attention on this rather limited encounter.

Within the first few minutes we politely discussed the subject of the Port Adriano, giving me his perspective on the harmony and personality of his creative port project. The genius shone through as soon as a question was posed that piqued his interest. Following his dialogue on the harmony and spirit he will no doubt achieve in this marina concept, I diverted him into the world of yacht design, and it became clear that he was almost offended by what he

saw while parading through Monaco. Using words such as “vulgarity” and “disaster”, coupled with the commonly used uttering of “no emotion”, Starck is not only a design revolutionary but perhaps more an environmental evolutionary, whereby he believes he gives life to everything he touches. His creative mind is like some form of primeval soup, out of which is spawned incredible perspectives, emotional yet retaining a functionality that is both adventurous and almost playful.

It became crystal clear that this man loves water – he even described himself as “potentially amphibian”, owning no less than 22 houses around the globe, all of which touch the water in some way or other; going on to suggest that it is impossible for him to live without a boat. This way of living and appreciation of the oceans would suggest that any yacht or lifestyle solution from Starck related to the ocean will have a clear understanding of how to enjoy the environment while sustaining it at the same time.

While I am fundamentally appreciative of the world of yacht design and for the past two decades have witnessed some level of evolution, Starck promises to bring to the table a whole new ethos. His qualifications are endless, proven design talent, unstoppable, and at the same time his love of the sea admirable; this promises to make him the perfect yacht designer and marina life architect, if that’s the correct term.

One of the lasting comments from our interaction has to be his description that yachts and the life associated with them are all driven by power and money, two of the most vulgar and damaging aspects of life and living; only 20% of yacht design seems to focus on harmony and happiness. While this may seem overly philosophical, you have to agree that while money “can’t buy you love” it should be able to create a living space that provides harmony away from vulgarity.

In summary, being inspired by such an incredible mind makes my job even easier and enjoyable and as a result not only do I await with eagerness the arrival of the Port Adriano completion, I hope to one day encounter the man again, but next time on one of his incredibly passionate projects, one with a spirit, a passion, a harmony and ultimately an adventurous solution to living well without damaging the delicate balance of life and the environment, it will be special, of that there is no doubt.

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