

Banding together to build a dream

A GROUP OF FRIENDS HAVE PUT THEIR MONEY AND SKILLS TOGETHER TO BUILD THEIR IDEA OF THE PERFECT TURKISH-STYLE SUPERYACHT

DAVID GLENN REPORTS

When Peter Cooke decided to commission the Kestrel 106 he did so with a clear objective: “To put family values back into large yacht sailing”.

That was three years ago and in 2011 the first aluminium-hulled, Ron Holland-designed Kestrel 106 will slide down the slipway at the well established Aganlar Boatyard in Bodrum, Turkey — either sold or with a market price of €7.5 million.

Kestrel Superyachts was set up to bring a fresh concept to market which Cooke believes has yet to be exploited in the large-yacht sector. “This yacht will consider the needs of everyone, sailor and non-sailor alike, without a deficit in sailing capabilities,” he says.

Cooke, who made his money during a successful career in the buildings insulation industry, believes that while the boom in superyacht construction was welcome, the top end of the market eventually lost sight of what many people really wanted from yachting — comfort while living aboard as a family; versatility; ease of use; and a rewarding ‘hands-on’ performance that should all be part of the equation.

Link this to his fascination for the gulet, the Turkish working boat concept which has become such a charter hit on the Turquoise Coast south of Bodrum, and one begins to get the picture. It is important to explain from the outset that while Cooke was inspired by the ethos of the gulet, the Kestrel 106 concept is



The Ron Holland-designed Kestrel 106 will “consider the needs of sailor and non-sailor alike”

impressive. A truly luxury finish, good sailing characteristics and versatility are not always familiar gulet attributes but they will all feature in the Kestrel 106, he claims.

All-round appeal

“Importantly the female investors had the opportunity to ensure that the boat met their requirements just as much as those of the men. The yacht may appeal just as much to those owning a motoryacht as a sailing boat, because it combines the best characteristics of both,” he says.

When it came to finding a designer Ron Holland was chosen as the person most capable of converting Cooke’s vision into a striking visual concept. Holland is deeply immersed in the supersail world being responsible for such high-profile projects as *Mirabella V* and a string of more performance

orientated Perini Navi yachts. He also has an excellent track record in smaller yachts and clearly relished the idea of something in the 30m (100ft) bracket.

“Holland could see the appeal of the gulet,” says Cooke “She has classic lines with a modern touch and big comfortable spaces.”

He has designed the 106ft Bermudan ketch with plenty of stability but at 22ft her beam is not excessive unlike the typical gulet.

She displaces 100t and as long as the project management team are tough with weight and keep to that figure this yacht will sail well in light airs and really impress in a Mediterranean breeze, especially off the wind.

Kestrel 106 is designed with two furling headsails, one an over-lapping, high clewed reacher, the other a high aspect ratio staysail good for additional off wind sail area and a real workhorse in fresh close hauled

situations. Main and mizzen are designed to be furled into the masts and with modern technology this can no longer be regarded as an unreliable option although one would need to keep an eye on maintenance and weight aloft, especially in a ketch. A good safety feature is the placing of the mainsheet on the deck saloon roof and the mizzen sheet well out of the way on the stern davits.

So in the pace department she should succeed and knowing Holland's ability to design a well balanced yacht she should be rewarding for the helmsman. Much has been achieved in recent years in naval architecture when it comes to large sailing yacht performance. Ten years ago anything over 120ft would have been uninspiring to sail

location and as long as the engineering works for the sliding mechanism it could set a trend.

Internal space

Down below there are four double cabins, two of them large doubles according to the general arrangement drawings but the layout can be left up to individual owners, within reason.

There's plenty of room for four crew up forward and there are big stowage areas in the forepeak and lazarette, although Holland will be keeping a very close eye on weight in these areas, we suspect. There is no question that a yacht this size needs a permanent crew not only to handle her, but to keep the systems in tip top condition by using them and carrying out regular maintenance.

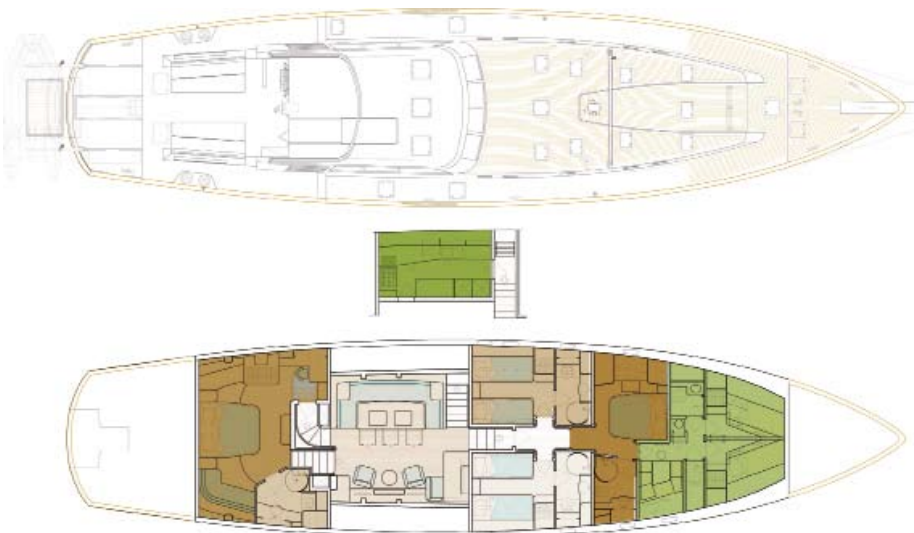
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unless she was very performance orientated, but today with lighter, stronger materials and more scientific research, a 100-footer can feel like a 50-footer.

What about space? This could be linked with versatility because she has an excellent cockpit seating arrangement. By designing ingenious athwartships-sliding benches, the whole area can be converted from a well-protected seagoing seating space to a dance floor-sized sole for entertaining while at rest. That après-sail drink with guests and crew or a corporate cocktail party — it's the perfect

Which leaves grace. Holland is a master of blending the old — or the traditional — with the new and this yacht is no exception. There is an air of gulet but the Kestrel 106 is definitely her own yacht with her attractive clipper bow, well-proportioned bowsprit and nicely drawn-out counter. The step in the sheer provides a vast amount of room in the aft accommodation but it doesn't offend aesthetically when one looks at the yacht in profile — at least in the drawings.

For a multitude of reasons this will be a yacht to watch out for. ●



Deck plan and internal layout of the gulet-inspired Kestrel 106

THE SEARCH FOR INVESTMENT



Cooke brought investors together with a common purpose to create the Kestrel 106

Peter Cooke floated the idea of the Kestrel 106 during the height of the superyacht building boom. He asked 24 private investors, all from Northern Ireland and Scotland, to put up between £100,000 and £250,000 each, once he had commissioned the design privately with one other shareholder.

“Each one had something to add to the project as well as their funds as shareholders. For example, we have an accountant, a lawyer, a professional chairman, an engineer, and a serial boat owner — all great contacts of possible buyers,” says Cooke. “As far as I know, none of them has ever worked in the marine industry!”

At this stage he is the sole employee — as managing director — and he runs the show supported by a six-person board of directors chosen from the shareholder body.

“They are incredibly committed to the success of the project. Four of the six board members are or were in the construction materials business, one as a builders merchant, two as materials producers, and another as a developer. Their combined experience in this very tough sector keeps our feet firmly on the ground.”

CONTACT DETAILS

► www.kestrelsuperyachts.com