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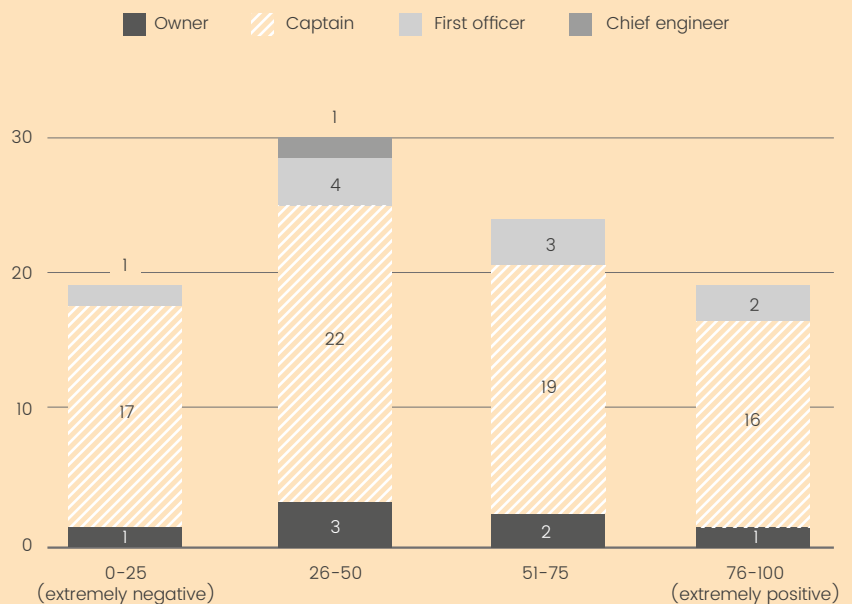
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The synergy between Here Comes The Sun's joint owners, Heywood, Winch and the Amels team is symbolic of the Limited Editions success story.

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Bigger and better



The latest addition to the growing Amels Limited Editions fleet is also the largest yet. What elements make Here Comes The Sun, the new 83m 272, so special and what does the finished yacht say about the evolution of a build method Amels introduced more than a decade ago?

BY TIM THOMAS

How does one define success? Is it in the line from a designer's pen or in the mastery of a technical layout? Is it marked by enduring friendship, counted on a company's balance sheet or measured by the size of an owner's superyacht? Is it in the collaboration of several teams working towards a common goal or in the maturing of a build method that is driving a yard to ever greater heights? Is it in the realisation of a grand idea or manifested in attention to the smallest details?

That the largest yacht yet launched under the Amels Limited Editions badge – the 83m *Here Comes The Sun* – impresses as much when approaching her by tender as when walking through her technical spaces is no accident. Her two owners – long-standing friends and business partners – are experienced, having owned yachts previously and having jointly owned the 65.5m Amels 212 LE *Imagine* launched in 2011. Their latest project features the same design team as that of *Imagine* – Tim Heywood for the exterior and Andrew Winch for the interior – and the project team and many of the crew have also come from that yacht.

"We worked with the same guys that we've worked with in the past," begins Yavor Nenov, the owners' representative for *Here Comes The Sun* and the previous *Imagine* build. "That's good because you build your own relationship with them. You know how to approach them, they know how to approach you and you know when to approach them to get good results. It worked very well."

If working with two owners on a single project sounds like a challenge, it hasn't been the case with these projects. This is helped in part by the fact that the two owners share different approaches and interests that have meshed perfectly – one has more

of a keen interest in the engineering and technical aspects of the yacht, while the other is more focused on the interior aesthetic; one enjoys secluded cruising in the Caribbean and the Americas, while the other prefers the Mediterranean.

This synergy is augmented by mutual goals. Both have growing families and felt the need for a larger yacht, both look forward to family cruising and to business entertaining on board, and both share a mutual trust in each other that has meant a smooth design and construction process. It shows in the finished yacht, which exhibits the seamless blend of coherent aesthetic and considered function that immediately stands out from the crowd. "It was very smooth in terms of planning and making decisions on materials and other stuff, because it's the same design team for the interior and exterior as for *Imagine* and it's the same team from Amels," confirms Nenov.

Behind all this is the accumulated knowledge of the Amels team and, in particular, their experience in developing the Limited Editions range of yachts. It started back in 2005 with an idea for a technical platform, dressed with Heywood's lines, that might appeal to clients, not least because of the shared engineering that promised considerable time savings over a fully custom new build. "Originally, we were hoping to sell six," says Heywood. The first Limited Editions model, the 171 *Deniki*, launched in 2007. Ten years on, the range has expanded to several platforms from the 55m 180 LE to this, the first of the 83m 272 LEs. Remarkably, the yard is currently starting construction on Limited Editions hull number 37, and several new designs – ranging potentially to more than 100m – are being developed.



Opening spread: Tim Heywood's elegant lines are matched to a carefully designed lighting scheme to emphasise the nuanced styling cues. Left: the floating staircase features a carved motif of a vineyard rising through the yacht, while the spiral design present throughout is integrated seamlessly between stair treads and elevator.

This expansion of the range over time has been carefully considered and Amels has made a point of taking a structured approach to this progression rather than being overly keen in light of the early successes of the concept. It means that the yard has also managed to successfully hone the process of design and construction, applying lessons learnt along the way. This includes implementing a highly organised work process that has led to considerable efficiencies in the construction phase, where all elements are carefully scheduled to avoid welding or teak laying interfering with painting, for example.

"When the hulls arrive in our finishing facility in Vlissingen, all the big equipment, the piping and main systems, are in already," says Hans Konings, design manager at Amels. "It's more an assembly hall than a hull-building facility and that's a big difference from when we started out 15 years ago because, back then, we approached it in the same way we did for full-custom boats. It took us five years to really nail it."

This same approach has also been applied to the development of larger models. "Every time you step up to a bigger vessel, you really have to double your organisation," Konings continues. "If you do this too quickly you dilute the people who have in-depth skills with people who are still learning, so exponential growth can really be the killer of a company. We did this gradually – from a 55m to a 65m, then a 74m and now the 83m." In addition, the idea of developing a technical platform works only if you can plan far enough ahead to ensure longevity in design. "There needs to be room for future growth, so when you have a good hull it stays largely the same – except for modifying or

stretching it, perhaps," confirms Konings. "We have to look far ahead in other areas and things such as load balance, the air-conditioning system, potable water and the like are actually laid out for a much larger vessel." Konings cites the 52m Amels *Tigre d'Or*, designed in 1997, as an example. "We've been using this platform for more than 20 years now," he says. "Of course, it's not the same platform any more, it is completely adapted, but on *Tigre d'Or* you could play football in the engine room. But if you go on to one of the new 180 LE yachts, the engine room is packed – the engines are bigger, generators have tripled in size, etcetera, but it still fits in the footprint of that original layout."

However, the Amels LE method is anything but a 'production' or even a 'semi-custom' business model. "It's not that once you've developed a Limited Editions model you can build another 10 for free," Konings explains. "Sometimes, we even have to go back to the design table because a client wants something in particular – a helideck, for example. There is also not one single boat that has a copycat interior, so that needs to be engineered each time as well." In fact, the Amels technical team has to re-check all the rules and regulations, as well as the supply of components and parts, every time a new project is started. "There is always a base amount of engineering hours and it's quite a lot actually – you would be surprised," continues Konings. "It's somewhere between 20,000 and 30,000 engineering hours for each yacht, even for a 'copy'."

Of course, *Here Comes The Sun* is the first of the 272 LE yachts, and as such was designed, engineered and developed as any other 83m custom build. This same approach was adopted for Heywood's



exterior lines, but while there are subtle clues here and there that hint at other Limited Editions models, there hasn't been a conscious decision to incorporate design DNA into any LE yacht. "The Limited Editions styling cues, I think, are just my styling elements," Heywood confirms. "I never thought of producing a design specifically for Amels. For the first model, the 171, I saw it simply as an opportunity to design a 52m yacht so I just went at it. There are certain things I've done with Amels that I've utilised and developed for this yacht, but there are things on here that are inspired by even bigger boats I've done. It's nice to be able to refine a design that is perhaps part of the Heywood family."

In true collaborative spirit, and with the owners being existing Limited Editions clients, it was only natural that the design would evolve with input from all parties. For example, the clients decided at an early stage that they wanted larger windows, and full balconies on the owner deck from the owner's office on one side and the cabin on the opposite side. The natural recliner seats nestled in the aft sweep of the sundeck arch coamings – such a success on the 212 LE *Imagine* – have also been translated to the 272 at the owners' request. "The balconies echo the form of the wing stations above, so it harmonises," says Heywood. "I'm also very pleased with the mast and I put the radar platforms off at different

angles to improve the radar signalling. The way the superstructure ends on the upper deck is art, a piece of sculpture. It's very satisfying to look around."

That the design incorporates practicality and function as well as form is no accident, and this holds true for both the exterior and the interior layouts. Crew routes have been very carefully considered and features, such as the second galley on the bridge deck, have evolved from being merely convenient to something of a feature that will appeal to the owners and charter guests alike. "Finishing the cooking right there next to the big upper-deck dining table means there are no serving or hotplate issues," says Winch. "On *Imagine*, we didn't have space to do that so going to a bigger boat gives the opportunity to do that for another quality of experience."

"The chef said 'Oh, that will be fun!'," adds Nenov. "For charters it's going to be a killer because charterers like the entertainment offered by the chef and he's a very open person. It will bring very good value to the yacht. Another huge improvement is the beach club. It's very welcoming and with the drop-down platforms it really has flexibility from being an indoor to an outdoor area."

The interior styling, selected almost exclusively by one of the owners, is pleasantly restrained, yet fantastically detailed. "It's definitely a floating home," says Winch. "When you walk around there

is no bling on the inside of this boat – it is all muted, satin, and all the metalwork is brushed bronze so there is no shiny material at all. Even the mirrored panels have been finished with an antique foil. Comfort was also a big deal; the owner chose the look but he trusted us to give the comfort."

Key details throughout the yacht hint at both the passions of the owners and the clever approach to dual-purposing. The columns in the main-deck saloon, for example, actually double as storage (forward) and space for the AV racks (aft). Subtle motifs, such as a repeated vortex theme, are used everywhere from the wooden carved panelling on the lower-deck wellness centre passage to the goatskin deckhead pattern above the main-deck dining table, right through to the design and colour of the floating treads on the feature spiral guest staircase. "The staircase is also a homage to a vineyard," Winch adds, explaining that one of the owners also has a vineyard. "It's a big thing for him, so the staircase has a motif of a vineyard growing up through the boat."

The layout is accomplished; the owners' suite is forward on the upper deck, leading out to a vast, level foredeck area that doubles as a helipad. The bridge deck features the main dining area to maximise the panoramic views and while this dining table is outside, sliding glass panels can help shield and insulate the area – a little like a winter-garden concept. The lower deck is given to crew and technical areas and the guest and VIP cabins enjoy a prime location on the main deck, along with a cinema.

The intent for the owners to cruise with their large families is the reason for having two of the cabins on the main deck convertible from VIP suites to two double cabins each, meaning that children and nannies can be accommodated. "When we're cruising with the nannies, we would be short on cabins if they were just standard VIP suites," Nenov explains.

Crew routes throughout are superb, with several staircases and hidden doors on every deck meaning that crew can go about their duties without interfering with guests and vice versa. It is testament to the amount of experience on both sides of the project team that such elements have been fine-tuned to such a degree. In addition, the extra volume afforded by the 272 has been realised not only in increased ceiling heights, giving the entire interior a much grander, more spacious feel, but also in the additional sound and vibration insulation that has been installed. "There is a big improvement with the sound, with sound insulation in the walls and ceilings and more insulation on the cabling and piping so you don't get the transmission of vibration," says Nenov. "In fact, there's been a big improvement in the whole technical-area layout." This has included swapping the three C9 generators originally planned with four C18 400kW generators that are housed in a separate generator room to further isolate the sound. The key to this

decision was one of the owners wanting to ensure the yacht could be run from one generator, and the whole power grid is, naturally, load-balanced. Amels has also made further improvements in panel access to technical spaces, valves and other pumps throughout the yacht to ensure ease of access for the engineering team in case of failure.

It is clear from the enthusiasm from every element of the project team that *Here Comes The Sun* has pushed all the buttons in terms of quality, practicality and style. It is something that has come to mark the success of the Limited Editions concept as a whole. "I'm really proud of this boat," Heywood enthuses. "It's wonderful that the yard had the opportunity to build it, but also this boat was built with a client in mind, whereas for other designs I've done for the Amels LE range, they had the guts to do it without a client, and that took some doing."

"It has been a joint project. 'Limited Editions' is perhaps the right way to describe these yachts, but in spite of the implications of so-called 'series' building, these boats are very much custom-built," Nenov concludes. "And I think Amels has the right concept because if you can save even one third of 30,000 hours of engineering, that money can create a whole sundeck!"

That, really, is what this yacht is all about – an evolved construction concept, top-notch engineering, ever-advancing build quality, experienced owners who work as well together as they do with their teams and the yard team, and a coherent design proposal for both interior and exterior elements. It is this synergy of the synergies that have come together in perfect unison to create this yacht which leads one to a simple conclusion – *Here Comes The Sun* is, arguably, the very definition of success. ■



Opposite: the secondary galley ensures quick service and interaction between chef and guests. Above: The aft beach club and wellness centre cleverly switches between an inside and outside space.