MYSTÈRE
SHADOW

words: Peter Boulton and Tim Thomas
photography: ~~Xxxxxxxx Xxxxxxxxxxx~~

DESIGNER STEFANO PASTROVICH AND THE MONACO MARINE TEAM HAD JUST IT INTO A FLOATING SPA AND BEACH CLUB, BUT WITH A TRUSTING OWNER, A NINE MONTHS TO TAKE A 30-YEAR-OLD COMMERCIAL VESSEL AND CONVERT GOOD CREW AND SOME IMAGINATIVE THINKING THEY ROSE TO THE CHALLENGE

Pastrovich on the spa

For designer Stefano Pastrovich, transforming *Mystère Shadow* into a luxurious day retreat presented a number of challenges. 'My first contact with the client was at the end of August 2010, introduced by Monaco Marine with whom I have a good relationship,' he says. 'The client wanted a refit, but not a big one – he wanted a spa, and to be able to enjoy the boat during the day or night. When I first went on board she still had the two "mud" tanks either side below. I said I wanted to destroy everything and make the area one big room, which meant a lot of work with the naval architects to reposition the structural support pillars.'

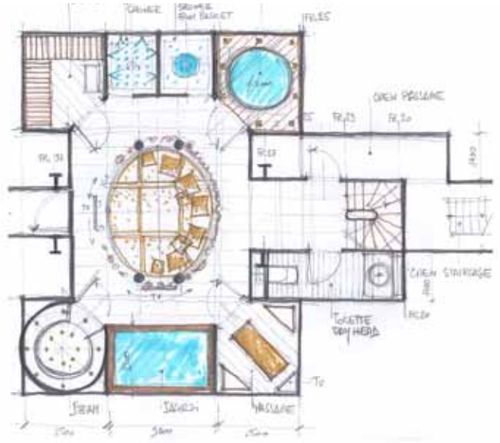
With the owner stipulating a spa in which he could spend all day, using the sauna, eating, drinking, watching television, Pastrovich set to designing the space. The central seating area is multi-functional with an adjustable table that means the space can be used for dancing, as a dining area, or as a daybed. For the finishes, Pastrovich specified Jerusalem stone which proved cheaper than regular marble, is easier to clean, and has a rough, almost anti-skid surface to it. Brown Carrara marble is used elsewhere, while more expensive Red Damasco is used sparingly for highlights.

'In order to start the refit on time,' Pastrovich continues, 'we had to have all the spa technical drawings done by December 2010. I had just five days to prepare the initial sketches, but it was a good relationship with the client. I didn't have to say "do you like this or that", he just trusted me so I just did it!'

Introducing *Mysère Shadow* is rather tough. She is not a 'white' yacht with flowers and exquisite furnishings and immaculate paintwork, but neither is she a true shadow yacht, with supplementary guest and spare crew accommodation, carrying a helicopter and lots of water toys (although the latter does apply). Possibly the most accurate description is that she is a 50 metre, floating entertainment centre day boat, devoted entirely to the essence of yachting – fun!

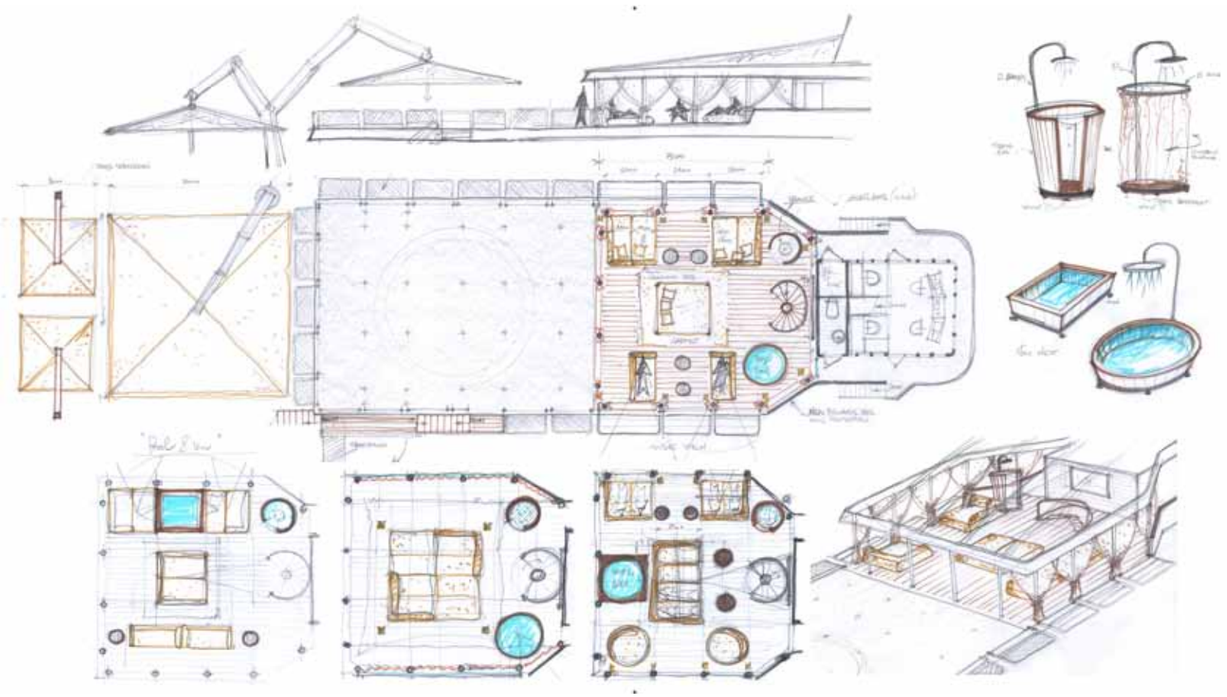
Mystère Shadow started life 30 years ago as an oil-rig supply vessel in the Gulf of Mexico. Like today, she had a high-bow, with bridge forward plus an immense hangar superstructure and a massive crane on the aft deck. She also had huge 'mud' tanks, so called because they contained a powder which, when mixed with water, formed a mud used for 'tamping' when drilling. As an indication of size, the eventual removal of these tanks involved cutting away 80 tons of steel... But the real story here lies with the captain and crew and their interaction with the ship and her owner.

Captain Ross Thomson is Australian, from Queensland and proud of it. Young, self assured and competent, he grew-up on the water and from age 10 was fishing and diving. By 1998 these sports had become professional so he worked on sportfish boats and eventually also became a diving instructor, all over a period of about seven years. A gradual transition lead to almost four years on a 56 metre shadow boat and he admits that he has never been and has no experience of being a 'white-boat' man. The majority of the crew, seven guys and three girls, are also Aussies, with the exception of a South African and a couple of Kiwis and, saving the chief engineer who just started, the guys had all been together on the previous shadow vessel. This was later sold in Dubai and, with the previous captain, everyone shipped aboard *Mystère Shadow* in Fort Lauderdale in July 2009. After three months of grooming First Officer Thomson, the captain left and everyone moved one pace sideways and upward. That was just over two years ago.



The lower deck spa is a wonderful space that not only features various treatment rooms off the central seating and entertainment area, but which also has a full cinema system for relaxing in front of a movie

‘There is a curtain at the end of the hangar,’ Pastrovich explains, ‘so the yacht has a public side and a private side. The owner has many friends and likes having people on board, but he doesn’t want them in his private space.’



When talking about 'The Boss', you can hear the respect and affection in Thomson's voice. 'When we first got the boat, she was really original, right down to the Shadow Marine title and telephone number painted on the hangar sides,' he says. 'It was decided to keep the hull colour, which is the same blue as you see today, but we got rid of the red inside the bulwarks and the gold stripe. While the crew still had paintbrushes in their hands, they gave the hangar a nifty blue and white paint job, as a sort of gesture to the boss.'

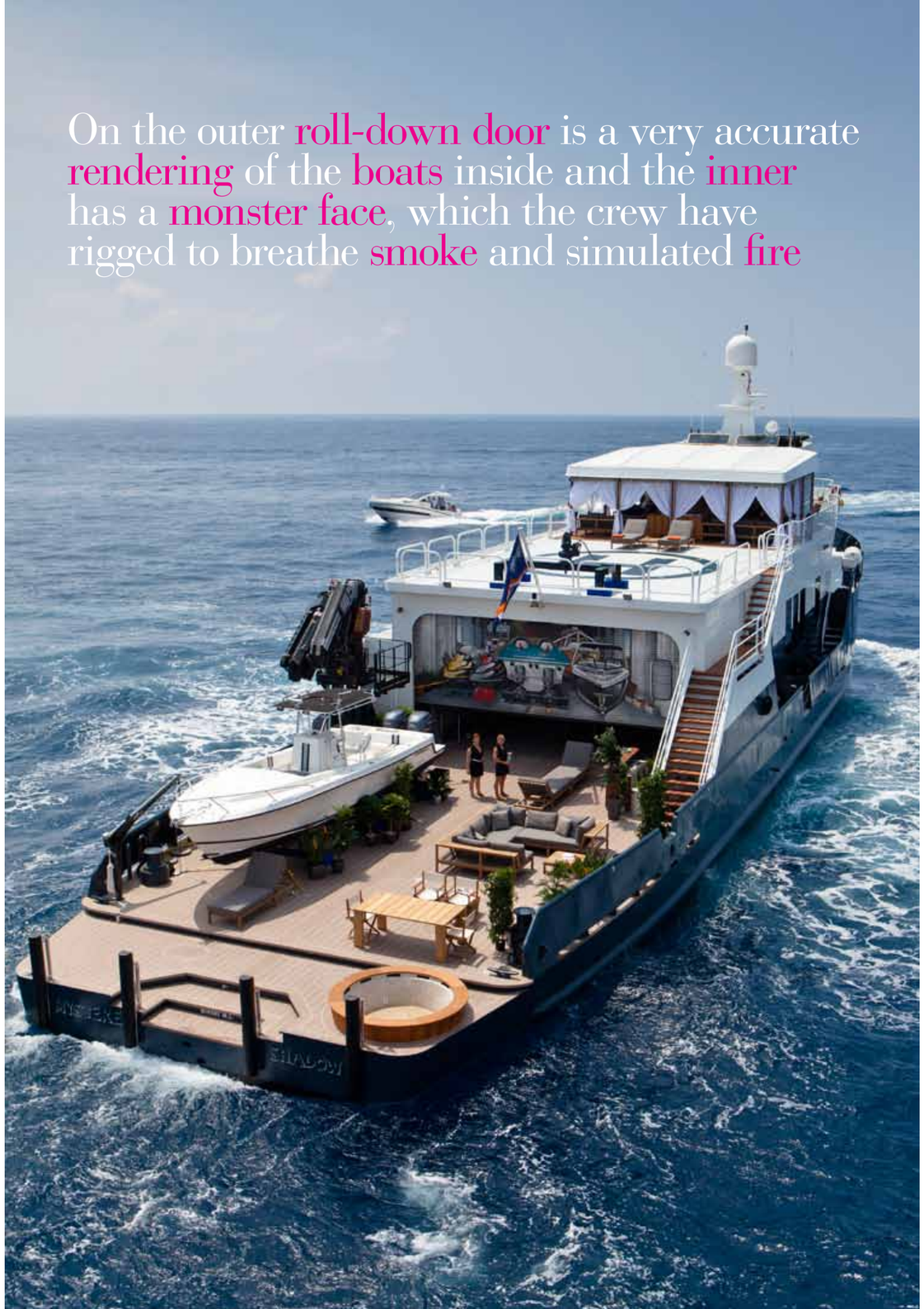
'It seems pretty amazing that the boat as you see it today is so recent, but in fact from the time the boss called in the designer, Stefano Pastrovich, in September last year, to what you see now, took just nine months and the guys at Monaco Marine were great,' he continues. 'The main engines were rebuilt, all new Caterpillar generators were installed, together with new electrics control panels and an Atlas shore power switching system, to name but a few!'

The 'what you see now' is truly astonishing. Two metres have been added to the stern, to better facilitate guests boarding the water toys. All of the hangar deck area has been laid with a wood-like finish over 3cm thick, which is tough and durable, but easy to keep clean. The hangar is a boat and furniture store, while the hangar top has been divided into a private space for the owner and guests, plus stowage for an "Iceberg" and a long blue and yellow inflatable water-slide. Once these items are in the water, the space reverts to a helicopter landing area and the crew are trained in its operation The part given over to the owner is a new structure supported on slim steel pillars, finished to resemble wood, with horizontal wood rails joining the tops, to which can be affixed silk curtains in fine conditions. Otherwise, clear plastic panels can be rolled down and zipped in place. This area has been decked teak and holly style, using African hardwood. By contrast, the forward bulkhead and a simple fold-out table are in plain golden teak, as are the cladding and rails for the spa pool in the after end.

A smoked glass door in the forward bulkhead opens onto a spiral stairway descending to the space once

The African tent-themed upper lounge (above and left) features open sides and very soft linen curtains which move with the wind. Loose modular furniture makes for flexible seating and can also be arranged to form a bed. The sides can be enclosed using the types of clear screens common in French brasseries

On the outer roll-down door is a very accurate rendering of the boats inside and the inner has a monster face, which the crew have rigged to breathe smoke and simulated fire



‘We only have one problem,’ her captain, Ross water, other boaters think we are a commercial Thomson, concludes. ‘With everything in the amusement park. It’s a bit embarrassing...’

Pastrovitch on the refit

‘She will be well used and has good functionality,’ says Pastrovich, ‘which gives a nice aesthetic. With function, 99 per cent of the time the result will be beautiful.’

For the new upper deck lounge, inspiration came from safari tents. ‘The client said he liked to sleep outside,’ Pastrovish explains. ‘It was a new cabin, where he wanted a degree of openness but also for the area to be enclosed if he wanted to sleep on board rather than going back to the mothership.’

Below, the hangar converts either to an informal, flexible lounge or to a full nighclub. ‘The ceiling fabirc is shaped like a wave,’ enthuses Pastrovich, ‘and while we were designing the space I thought, why don’t we have it so the whole ceiling slides aft outside? The owner liked the idea, so I called some companies who do stage systems for rock concerts, and they suggested using a tubular metal lighting rig on a sliding crane. So I contacted a company who builds the motors but they couldn’t do it in time - athough it will be fitted at a later stage, which means that 16m by 8m – complete with side curtains – will slide aft making an outside disco...’

The aft deck was extended and reshaped to prevent noise from the water slapping against the hull, and with the hull extension came a spa pool in the aft starboard corner. ‘I had to be brave with that,’ says Pastrovich. ‘and many people asked if I was sure I wanted to do it. If you find a good client who trusts you, and it’s not expensive or doesn’t spoil the aesthetic, you can open people’s eyes.’

‘The refit was like building your own house,’ Pastrovich concludes. ‘We had to follow it every day! This was so quick, there was no time to think. It was a big challenge...’

With the tenders and toys in the water, the aft deck becomes a giant beach club complete with various bits of loose furniture and even rugs in case the decks become too hot. The next upgrade will be a sliding light and sound rig that will bring the nighclub out from the hangar to the aft deck for alfresco parties

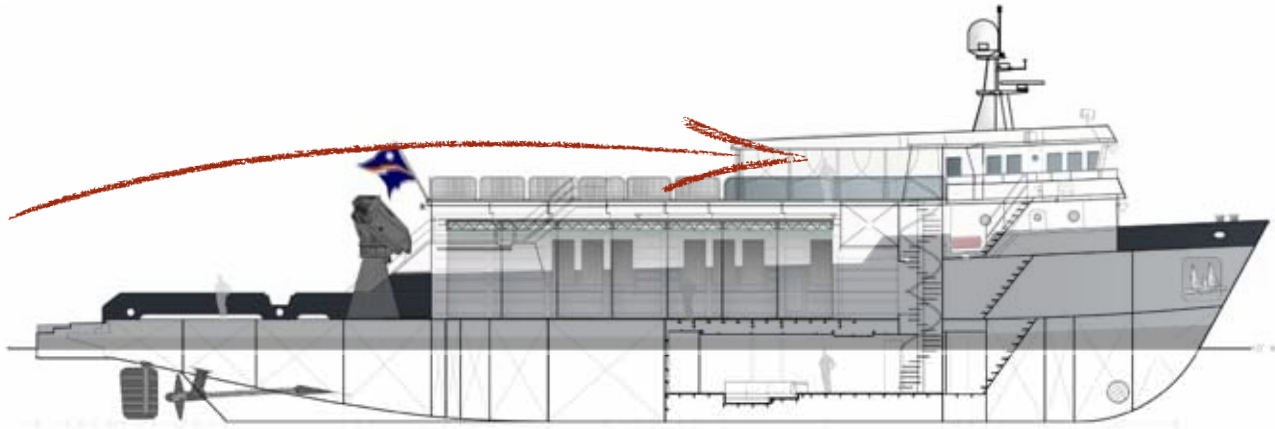
occupied by those mud tanks. As Thomson describes it, ‘The boss always knew what he wanted and Stefano was good at interpretation, although we sometimes had to rein him in a bit. But the result is a full-beam space dedicated to relaxing.’ A central area with sofas and a vertical-lift table is surrounded by glass fronted rooms offering sauna, steam, ice, rain shower and so on.

With so much more to discover, Thomson explains a few details. ‘In Fort Lauderdale we did a couple of weeks basically checking machinery, then set off for the Med and wound up in Turkey. Nothing much happened there, except we installed a modern crane finished to look like a gun, which really tickled the boss. Then we ran around Sardinia and finally headed for Barcelona for the winter.’ At this point, he indicates the outer and inner hangar doors which have been painted as murals. ‘We found these two characters with Rasta hair who seemed to know what they were doing and that’s it.’ On the outer roll-down door is a very accurate rendering of the boats inside and the inner side has a monster face, which the crew have rigged to breathe smoke and simulated fire. This is for when the hangar is rigged as a huge and authentic disco. ‘All this time,’ says Thomson, ‘we were in original order, but the boss would come on board, look around, have a chat and a beer and fill his mind with ideas for things as they are now.’ Thomson grins and adds, ‘He calls us his “pirates” and knows we work hard and would do anything for him. He’s a young guy with a youthful attitude and he does lots for us too.’

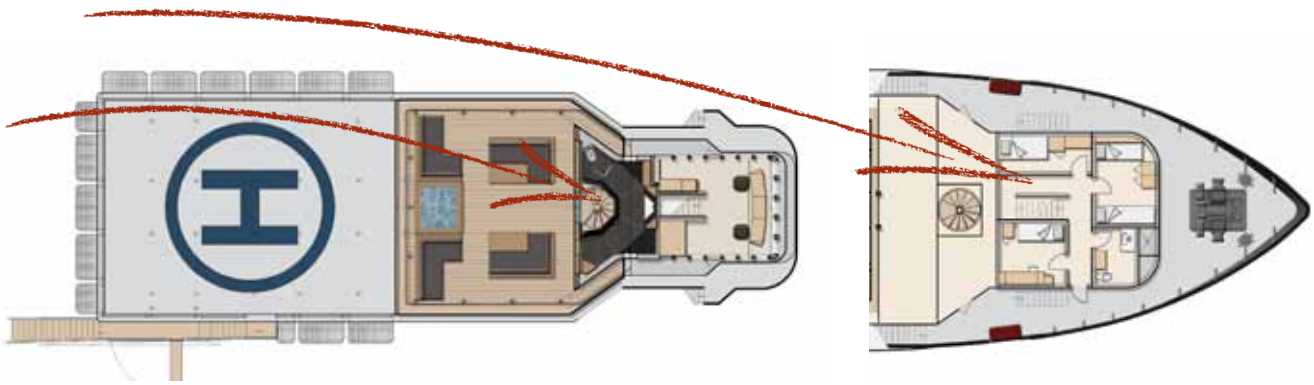
Referring to the day boat entertainment centre title he says, ‘The boss tells us he’s coming and we rig everthing. Boats in the water, the iceberg, the waterslide, sofas, rugs on the aft deck – everything. The guests arrive, have lots of fun but, at the end of the day however long, everyone goes “home”.’ And the iceberg? ‘That,’ Thomson explains, ‘is a floating climbing wall – everybody loves it.’

For such a remarkable transformation, from commercial vessel to party central, to have been completed in only nine months is some achievement. ‘We only have one problem,’ Thomson concludes. ‘With everything in the water, other boaters think we are a commercial amusement park. It’s a bit embarrassing...’

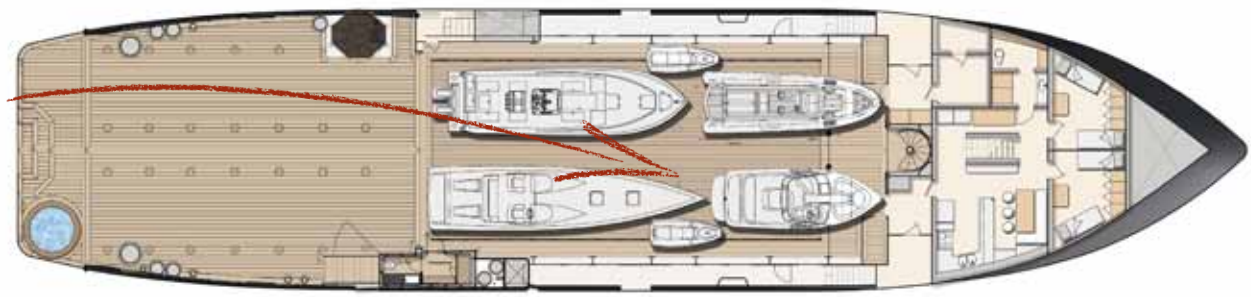
Along with stairs to the upper deck on the starboard side, a big addition was the 'safari tent' up top, an open, airy saloon that can double as an owner's sleeping cabin



A new spiral staircase was added to link the various decks together. The crew and working areas remained untouched



The main hangar is a multi-purpose space, variously housing the panoply of tenders and toys, acting as a saloon and dining area, or converting into a cinema or a fully fledged nightclub



Removal of the 'mud' tanks, and 80 tons of steel, meant that the lower space forward could be widened to form an open plan spa

MYSTÈRE SHADOW *Houma Shipyards / Monaco Marine*

LOA 49.7m
Beam 11.58m
Draught 3.5m
Displacement 249T
Gross tonnage 831GT
Engines
2 x Caterpillar D398 TA, 615kW each

Speed (max/cruise)
10 knots / 10 knots
Range at 10 knots
6,500nm
Thrusters
Detroit
Generators 2 x Caterpillar C4 @ 99kW

Fuel capacity
160,000 litres
Water capacity
20,000 litres potable
55,000 litres for washdown etc
Owner and guests 2/NA
Crew 10

Tenders
1 x 11.6m Eliminator Eagle, 1 x 9.9m Contender, 1 x 8.5m Nautica Rib 28 Catamaran, 1 x 6.1m Mastercraft X2, 2 x quad bikes, 2 x jet skis, 2 x SeaBobs, 2 x jet-powered surfboards, 2 x Laser sailing dinghies, other toys

Construction
Steel
Classification
ABS
Original builder/year
Houma Shipyards/1981
Refit naval architecture
Robert McFarlane & Associates

Refit interior and exterior design
Pastrovich Studio
Refit yard/year
Monaco Marine/2010-2011
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