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# WINDOW *fashions*

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see page 68



## Designers Set Sail: Creating Window Fashions for Yachts



Joan Hoffman Berglund, senior project manager at Ramsey Engler Ltd., considered both durability and noise control when choosing fabrics for the *Anson Bell*, a 161-foot motor yacht that sails the rivers of the Midwest. A hobbled roman shade in wool crepe covers a semitransparent tech shade made from a manmade mesh. "The fabric shades fit our need for a sophisticated, contemporary interior and gave us soft color and texture at the windows," says Hoffman Berglund. Fabric: J. Robert Scott. Fabricator: Drapes, Etc., Minneapolis, MN. Installation and motorization: Contemporary Blind Design, Minneapolis. Photography: ©Chesler Photography.

By Lali Silva

When salaries plump, nothing is more tempting to buy than floating digs. And lucky for us, clients need a little help revamping their nautical headquarters. "People are using their boats as second homes," says Katie Bradford, founder of the 19-year-old Custom Marine Canvas. "And they're decorating them accordingly."

Window treatments are biting off a bigger chunk of the yacht design budget than in the past. Fort Lauderdale's Grace Sullivan, a 15-year veteran of yacht interior design, holds witness to 8 to 10% budget

increases—and in some cases, up to 20% increases—in the portion of the budget dedicated to window treatments.

As funds rise, design options grow. Sullivan, who founded the 101 Group in 2000, has worked with an array of treatments, from mini-blinds to pleated shades to today's trendy wooden blinds.

### Sea, Salt & Sun

Regardless of a full design plate, Mother Nature triumphs over beauty, and the harsh marine environment of the yacht industry is a critical consideration in the design process.

"Being surrounded by water and the

reflection of light off the water has a very deteriorating effect," says founder of the Home & Garden Company, Eva Glaser. "The extreme light is probably twice as strong as on land." This light intensity can cause fabrics and particularly linings to erode at a faster rate. Through designing her own 55-foot Trumpy motor yacht, *Shiloh*, Glaser discovered blackout-lining ROC-NITE, which is guaranteed not to crack, peel, or fade.

In further design ventures, Glaser used Sunbrella fabrics and a French line called Perennials with a one- or two-year no-fade guarantee, respectively. Made from acrylic with a sheer style, these products, designed

for outdoor use, shield off bugs and prying eyes, Glaser notes. In a recent project on a 32-foot sailboat, Bradford coordinated seven fabrics throughout the upholstery and window treatments using two different Sunbrella colors. "In the marine environment, Sunbrella is great for drapery," says Bradford.

When installing wooden blinds or shutters, certain woods warp in the rough weather and should be avoided. Bradford, who's based in Connecticut, uses Boat Blinds for her wooden and aluminum blinds. "Household treatments may contain components that rust," says Bradford. Andy Flack, sales manager for Canvas Designers Inc. in Riviera Beach, FL, recently finished a combination treatment of 2-inch basswood blinds with draperies on a 56-foot custom sports yacht. A variety of woods can be used in marine conditions. Sullivan has experience with teak, natural maple, cherry, and walnut wood.

#### Design Mariner

As a skilled service profession, addressing the intricate details is critical to the durability of a treatment in yacht design. On her most recent project, the 1965 *Huckins* yacht, Glaser replaced a fragile wood track of an aft sliding door with a more durable aluminum architectural track and plastic slides to minimize saltwater damage. Brian Consterdine of Design Shoji, a shoji-screen manufacturing company, custom designs their top and bottom tracking, which was built to accommodate changes in wood and humidity present in a marine environment.

If fortune prevails, a client will claim money is no object and material limitations render irrelevant. "The bigger yachts don't care about the cost," says Sullivan. "They want the best. They want silk." In a past project, Bradford installed a luxurious Thai-silk roman shade.

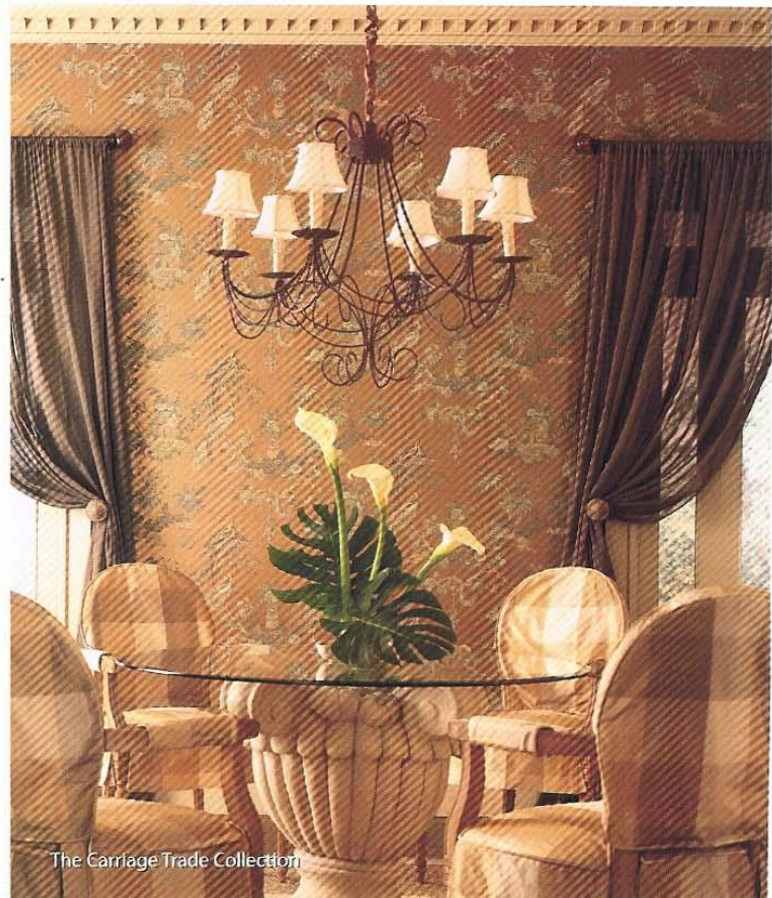
However, the average yacht owner desires practicality and longevity. For example, a wooden blind paired with a valance covered in an upholstered fabric endures a salty environment without sacrificing style. Sullivan's partial to the Phifer Sheerweave, which blocks sunlight while maintaining a view.

When working with mini-blinds in the past, Sullivan piped fishing line through the ladders of the treatment, which were then secured to

the head rail and attached to the window frame. This makeshift design prevented any flapping when the boat was in motion. Today, companies, including Bamboo Abbott, install treatments with a tie-down option.

Joan Hoffman Berglund, senior project manager at Ramsey Engler Ltd., considered both durability and noise control when choosing fabrics for the *Anson Bell*, a 161-foot

motor yacht designed for a family in the Midwest. She focused on wool crepes and synthetic fabrics, but also added gaskets and pad rods to the design, which eliminated rattling while at sea. "Window treatments are essential on a boat," says Hoffman Berglund. "They conceal the interior and protect the carpeting, wood, and fabrics from the damaging rays of the sun."



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**“Most important, a yacht’s window-treatment design must not impede the gorgeous views out the window.”**

Katie Bradford commonly creates a combination of hard and soft treatments in her design. One project paired a pleated moving rail shade with a soft drapery. The drapery functioned as a cover for the shades’ ends. Perfect for a boating environment, the moving rail system of the shade was self-contained allowing minimum flapping when hitting the rough waters.

Apart from durable materials and custom design, the view, both from the client’s perspective and voyeuristic passersby, plays a major role in the design process. Privacy is a critical issue. “The boat could be docked at a busy harbor and the owners and guests may not want to be seen,” says Hoffman Berglund. “Most important, a yacht’s window-treatment design must not impede the gorgeous views out the window.”

On the *Anson Bell*, Hoffman Berglund covered both functional and aesthetic challenges. She used a semitransparent tech shade from a manmade mesh material as an undertreatment, and a fabric hobbled shade for the overtreatment. “The fabric shades fit our need for a sophisticated, contemporary interior and gave us soft color and texture at the windows,” says Hoffman Berglund.

Critical to privacy and a huge part of energy efficiency, screens provide an ideal solution to creating personal space without obscuring a fantastic view of the open water. Barrett Enclosures Inc. offers a high-quality screen product made of woven fiberglass and PVC combinations, perfect for enduring sun and salt.

Barrett Enclosures’ CEO, Mike Sofie, emphasizes the importance of the openness factor, which relates to the proportion of the hole size in a screen. For the bed-



room, where less sunlight is desired for those early sunrises, Sofie suggests a 4% openness factor, to block out more sunlight. A 17% openness factor works well for a more active room like the yacht’s salon.

The American Society of Interior Designers reports that the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a faster rate of growth among interior designers than any other occupation through 2008. With this rise in employment, specializing in certain types of design help build a designer’s repertoire. So, grab your life jacket and measuring tape and dive into the sumptuous waters of yacht interiors. WF

Above) On the other side of the dining room is the salon of the *Anson Bell*. Throughout the ship, the window treatments are motorized. Roman shades have blackout lining, and undertreatments are light filtering. Gaskets and pad rods eliminate rattling while at sea. Photography: ©Chesler Photography.

Below) The owner’s stateroom aboard the *Anson Bell* shares its window-treatment concept with the dining room, right down to the fabrics. Interior design by Ramsey Engler Ltd., Minneapolis, MN. Photography: ©Chesler Photography.

