



05

TECH AND WELLNESS

Introduction by Valentina Zannier

PENT.



Tech and Wellness

VALENTINA ZANNIER

As well-being becomes a priority among superyacht owners, the Venice-based designer takes a dive into a new era of fitness on board

For the last three decades, Venice-based design studio Nuvolari Lenard has been behind the exterior and interior design of some spectacular yachts, aeroplanes and properties; nautical success stories include 107-metre sailing yacht *Black Pearl* and motor yachts such as 86-metre *Seven Seas*.

The firm is the brainchild of a dynamic duo: naval engineer and architect Carlo Nuvolari and designer Dan Lenard, who, along with their team, have created a design force to be reckoned with. One of the studio's leading lights is partner and chief of interior design Valentina Zannier, who counts 115-metre *Ahpo* as one of her favourite projects. "As a designer with a long, long career, you do remember certain yachts – this one is very dear to me," she says.

Zannier, a trained architect, is widely known for her spa designs and for *Ahpo* she created wellness areas that raised the bar and caught the industry by surprise with their innovative use of space, integrated design flow and advanced facilities.

For every project she's worked on, there's an air of real creative flair. "When I was young, I wanted to be an artist; I never really wanted to be an architect by education," she says. "I think this artistic approach and attitude has become useful in my career because, as an interior designer, you have to generate shapes and ideas from scratch. You need this creativity."

*Valentina Zannier
on tech and wellness*

"Over the past three or four years, owners have started asking for wellness spaces on board, and the size of such areas is growing and growing. Before, they were squeezed into small spaces near the beach clubs, so you never had the chance to create an entire dedicated area. But that has changed.

Of course, the size of wellness areas is linked to the size of the boat – I read that *Ahpo* has one of the biggest spas ever for its length (115 metres) – but it's also linked to technology. When designing a spa, you really need to have the support of good technical people, because sometimes you don't realise how big the machines involved can be. You can't only think about aesthetics. Before promising anything to the owners, who may ask for impossible things, it's important to work out if you have the space.

If you want to have a huge hot tub, steam room, sauna and salt room, for instance, all these things have to work together, so the layout is very important. Add in a massage room and a beauty salon and you have an idea of what you need in terms of square metres.

With one 70-metre superyacht project, built by Lürssen, we had a great pool of engineers and we were able to build a salt room, a snow room and a cryotherapy chamber, which I've only seen before in hotel spas. Cryotherapy is particularly complicated, as you need to have hydrogen and a dedicated room for storing that.

Some clients – like the owner of this yacht – still ask for a spa that is more like a hotel spa in that it's completely separated from the rest of the boat, so we use design to clearly define this split. Other owners, such as the owner of *Ahpo*, ask us to merge wellness spaces with the rest of the boat, which can be more complex.

For me, the beauty of *Ahpo*'s spa is the mix of two areas. For its wellness area, the owners didn't want to lock themselves away in the darkness. So we blended the spaces. We have the wet area behind the big spa pool – where you find the sauna, steam room, plunge pool and showers – and, on the other side, there's a huge relaxation area with sofas and armchairs (instead of classic sunbeds) and a fully equipped bar. The spa is also linked to the main deck saloon by a staircase. This is a very uncommon layout

Previous pages:
PENT luxury fitness
equipment for
yachts. Left: Paragon
Diabolo dumb-bells
by Gym Marine.
Opposite page:
Valentina Zannier,
chief of interior
design at Nuvolari
Lenard



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Above: the wellness area on a 110-metre yacht with emotional shower and Japanese screens that separate the gym from the wet area. Right: Ahpo's gym is huge and takes the place of the upper deck lounge. Below: the beach club on a 115m yacht blends functions with a central pool and spa pool, fully equipped bar and a gym area overlooking the sea

Notable projects:

- 107m Oceanco – Black Pearl (with Ken Freivokh)
- 86m Oceanco – Seven Seas
- 115m Lürssen – Ahpo
- 90m Oceanco – Dar



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Above: Ahpo's massage room sets a serene ambiance, with encapsulated bamboo trees with backlit panels, bespoke massage beds, stools in solid teak and hand-painted wallpaper on the ceiling. Right, bottom: the gym on the 90m Dar is bright and has all the necessary kit

because the main saloon is the most formal area on the yacht, but this arrangement was done on purpose so that guests could arrive at the beach club on a tender, enter a lounge and have a drink, and then go upstairs and have dinner. The owner loved it.

Fitness is a very serious thing in yacht design now – I would say it's one of the top five most important spaces on the yacht. Being so successful, these owners need somewhere to let it all go. The same goes for wellness. Owners who work hard need to exercise, but they also need to relax and switch off.

Most owners work out religiously every day, so the gym is never left to the guest area or a small space. On many yachts, the fitness club is on the owner's deck, directly connecting with the cabin. On Ahpo, it's in the upper deck lounge. This gym is special because it's the biggest anyone has been in on any boat. It's packed with equipment including a Peloton bike, every type of runner, an elliptical machine and, of course, free weights. It's a huge area and the owner goes every morning.

Gym equipment has evolved in a big way in recent years. We usually work with a company called Gym Marine. They

provide the service, create layouts and help us understand which machines the owner may like based on their wish list. They also offer a service that I think is priceless: wherever the boat is in the world, if something goes wrong with the equipment, they can reach you. As the machines are becoming more and more complicated, the risk that something can go wrong is increasing, so you need to have people like this at hand who can quickly solve the problem.

The technology you see on board now is amazing. I am a big user of spas – in my free time I love to go to them, and I'm always looking out for new, advanced spaces. I've visited a lot of spas and I've never seen the kind of technology we use on board in any hotel on land.

One of the main issues is that, as well as being intuitive to use, technology needs to be invisible. Take televisions – they are nightmares for designers, because the owners want them to be everywhere, but they don't want to always see them. I often hide them behind roll-down screens and sliding doors, and owners appreciate this because when they don't use the TV, they have a beautiful wall instead.

oThe big question going forward is, how can we hide technology on board and still get super-high-level service? For instance, snow rooms, saunas and salt rooms all work with different temperatures, lighting, aromatherapy and so on, so getting all these things to come together – and disappear – in the same space is a challenge.

But technology is supporting designers much better than in the past. Intuitive, compact solutions that can integrate into walls and ceilings are being developed, which is helpful, and not just for the spa. As these technologies are getting better and better, I think there is no limit to what can be achieved." Interview by Rachel Ingram



Above: a spacious gym on a 110m yacht designed by Zannier with full-height windows, Technogym equipment and a vertical weight rack. Below: the Paragon Studio collection

