



BY PHIL PURCELL

CEO/President, Marine Industries Association of South Florida

Writer Liz Wegerer



THE FLOATING LIVING SPACE

THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES WHEN DESIGNING FOR A YACHT

Great interior design elevates a living space into a functional work of art. South Florida is replete with examples of skilled designers transforming interior spaces into havens of beauty and style. From high-rise condos to waterfront villas, our home lives are enriched thanks to the creativity and vision of these interior artists.

But what happens when that living space floats? And there are numerous outdoor living areas to consider, all of which will be exposed to extreme conditions? While general design principles still apply, an interior designer is faced with unique challenges when creating the living spaces on a yacht. Things you never think about on land, like securing a lamp on a side table or where safety equipment is stored, suddenly require great consideration when you're designing for life at sea.

Nobody knows this or does it better than Amy Halfman, who has been creating unforgettable interiors for yachts and superyachts for more than 20 years. With more than 100 new build yachts under her belt so far, Halfman has seen and done it all when it comes to yacht interior design. Which is why she is one of the most sought-after designers in the marine market today.

Halfman honed her design skills at the helm of Westport Yacht's interior design department. There she worked closely with yacht owners to design interior and exterior living spaces that captured the essence of the owners' personality. Whether it was her team managing the entire design process or she was working with an owner's personal designer, Halfman turned out unforgettable living spaces throughout her 12-year tenure at Westport.

Since 2016, Halfman has been leading her own interior

design business – Halfman Designs, focusing on marine, residential, and aviation interiors. Based in Seattle, she works on projects around the world for clients with yachts of all sizes. Not surprisingly, she spends a lot of time in Fort Lauderdale.



Amy Halfman

PHOTO BY STEPHANIE CRISTALLI

But you won't hear her self-promoting her exceptional skills. Instead, she adopts a low-key approach to what she does, choosing instead to let her work speak for itself. And speak it does. Superyacht owners seek out her services to create their personalized living spaces, often for every boat they commission.

One of her most high-profile projects to date is M/Y Boardwalk, the 252-foot Feadship that hit the water earlier this year and made an appearance at the 2021 Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show. Boardwalk represents the fifth yacht Halfman has worked on for the superyacht's owner, billionaire hospitality and casino mogul, owner of the NBA Houston Rockets, Tilman Fertitta.

Designing the interiors for a superyacht is challenging under the best of circumstances. But when you throw in a global pandemic and a significant health situation (Halfman was diagnosed with breast cancer in January 2020), delivering a finished project on time is an even greater achievement.

"Even though the build for Boardwalk began well before 2020, finishing the interior components really ramped up toward the end of 2019. It was a challenging situation being in the thick of things while facing both unexpected healthcare demands and the global issues caused by Covid-19," Halfman said when asked about working to complete Boardwalk's interior.

"Before Covid, I was traveling back and forth to the Netherlands regularly, but that stopped early in 2020 when travel ground to a halt," she noted. "We had to get creative to keep the momentum going. Thankfully, I have a great team to lean on and an exceptional owner who I've worked with for years. Despite the bumps in the road, we carried on without a hitch, and delivered Boardwalk by the deadline."


The result is understated elegance and an excellent example of Halfman's attention to detail and thoughtful design. It is also a perfect reflection of Boardwalk's owner. 

PHOTO BY KRISTINA STROBEL

