Sea Change off Florida

NAUTICAL ELEGANCE GAINS A FOOTHOLD ON THE *LADY KATHRYN III*

Interior Design by Jack Fhillips/Text by John Loring
Photography by Kim Sargent

ABOVE: "So many of these new boats are like discos," says Jack Fhillips, who designed the interiors of the *Lady Kathryn III*, Leo and Kathryn Vecellio's 148-foot high-speed yacht. "We wanted to take a contemporary boat and make it classic, timeless and comfortable."

RIGHT: "The media room's paneling and tonality are the same as in the couple's residences," says Fhillips, who furnished the space with 18th- and 19th-century pieces, including a Georgian card table. Beacon Hill fabrics on games chairs, scroll-arm chair, club chairs and ottoman.

With a vast Tuscan-style villa perched in the Colorado mountains in Vail, an ample, 15,000-square-foot woodland country retreat in the hills of West Virginia and a historic Norman Revival manor house built in 1928 by the legendary Palm Beach architect Maurice Fatio on the Lake Worth shore of Palm Beach island, it would be hard to choose a favorite.

"I've certainly enjoyed them all," Leo Vecellio observes, "but my two favorite spots are our new boat, the *Lady Kathryn III*, and the house in Vail. They encourage me to relax."

Boat is a modest word for the Vecellios' *Lady Kathryn III*, a not at all modestly scaled 148-foot motor yacht of exemplary stylishness that has a dominant presence when it is in port at the yacht basin at the foot of Palm Beach's Australian Avenue (an aptly named port for the Australian-built beauty).

For a man whose business is building roads, bridges and golf courses and who has been known to quip, "Some people play golf courses; I build them," a 148-foot yacht is, in all modesty, still a *boat*.

"Throughout the 30 years we've been married, we've always had boats. The dimensions changed—as did the décor," Kathryn Vecellio recalls. "The *Lady Kathryn I* was our first serious adventure with a yacht. She was 103 feet, traditionally decorated, but she didn't have enough rooms for our two sons, Christopher and Michael. So we moved up to the 113-foot *Lady Kathryn II*. That one had already been decorated with woven-grass wallcoverings, a grass-skirt dust ruffle on the bed in the master bedroom, and the odd tiki here and there."

"It had a wonderful feel for the islands," Leo Vecellio grants, "but within five minutes of closing, the grass dust ruffle was first off the boat." And the tikis were banished.

The *Lady Kathryn III* was a recent discovery, and it—like its predecessor—was fitted out in an unwanted style. "However," Kathryn Vecellio explains, "she had so many of the qualities we were looking for. She could travel at 29 knots and turn on a dime. She had great lines and wonderful spaces, both exterior and interior. And the four staterooms gave us the room we needed for our sons and their friends.

"Despite all that, I was having a hard time getting through the heavy Art Déco–style interiors. I'm very traditional, and I wanted the new boat to reflect

TOP: The sitting room off the master suite "was a bit dark," remarks Fhillips, "so we added a little jolt of color." The canvases, from left, are by Grigory Roshin and Ernest Vauthrin. Beacon Hill fabrics for draperies, sofa and Brunschwig & Fils armchairs. Lighting from Vaughan.

"If practicality were the utmost priority, we'd end up with what other yachts have—synthetic fabrics and leathers," Fhillips says. "That's exactly what the Vecellios didn't want." ABOVE: The sleek and spacious galley features wood cabinetry with stainless-steel details.

Queen Anne–style chairs surround a round Regency table, which echoes the shape of the dining room. The dinnerware, stemware and Tiffany's silverware are from M. S. Rau Antiques. Brunschwig & Fils chair and drapery fabrics. Samuel & Sons tassel trim. Wallcovering from Kravet.

our lifestyle, which combines work, pleasant outings with family and friends and the rather frequent events we host for our favorite charities.

"So I called in our designer, Jack Fhillips, who's been working with us ever since he did a spectacular addition 12 years ago for the house in Florida. I told him, 'You've got to come look at this one and tell me if it can be done with the warm, inviting look I want.' He said, "'OK, it can be done.'"

"Kathryn took it from there," her husband says. "My own concerns with the boat are on the technical side. I confine my work to the systems and the mechanical spaces."

For the *Lady Kathryn III*'s décor, Kathryn Vecellio and Fhillips used the palette of a favorite painting, a beach scene with an Impressionist feel by contemporary Russian painter Vladimir Nasonov, as a starting point. "The change in palette from the coldness of Déco to the beach scene's golds, soft reds and sands set the tone," Kathryn Vecellio explains. "I tend to go for golds, reds, berry colors and greens. In this case, we added a site-specific 'Palm

TOP: Phillips designed a Hepplewhite-style console to hide air-conditioning ductwork in the entrance hall. ABOVE: A guest room—one of four staterooms—"is very luxurious," says the designer. The trio of engravings are 18th-century French. Bedside lamp from Vaughan.

Beach peach' to the palette.

"Our collection of nautical paintings had evolved as it traveled from boat to boat, growing with each move, and it would play a leading role on the new boat, as it had on the others. Periods and styles are mixed, but the colors of the great textiles and woods Jack Phillips uses tie it all together.

"We put Queen Anne–style

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The top deck of the *Lady Kathryn III*, which has a banquette upholstered in a bold striped fabric, looks out onto West Palm Beach's skyline. Tables, designed by the clients, "adjust both vertically and horizontally to accommodate multiple uses on the deck," Phillips notes.