

Choo Choo

Versilcraft – Planet 120S Hard Top Long Range

New Versilcraft's most exciting offering to date is crammed with surprises, including a sensational mosaic of Napoleon, as Phil Draper reveals. Interior photography by Bugsy Gedlek; underway by James Taylor





Guests who visit the bright and airy upper saloon are rewarded with superb 360-degree views from behind the compact pilothouse

On the surface, New Versilcraft's latest flagship, the Planet 120S Hard Top Long Range, has a lot in common with the Italian yard's existing slightly smaller Planet 110 and 115 models. Indeed, the hull, deck and superstructure of the new boat emanate from the same basic tooling. However, the 120S boasts some distinctive differences, not least a 'hard top' that does away with the raised pilothouse by enveloping the flying bridge, and improved guest accommodation thanks to the extra 3 metres in the hull length.

The real surprises, though, are to be found on the inside of this first 120S, *Choo Choo*. For instance, enter through the double aft deck doors and you are greeted by an enormous main saloon. It is not only the sheer size of this room – the length in particular – that makes you draw breath, but also the brightness of the décor. This is an amazingly light and airy environment, due not only to the large picture windows on both sides and the almost complete absence of bulkheads, but also to the sheer energy of the

materials and textures. The interior design of *Choo Choo*, a highly customised boat that demonstrates the superb craftsmanship of her builders, is by Angelo Neri, the Viareggio-based terrestrial architect and interior designer. *Choo Choo* is his first yacht, and he makes brilliant use of the available space. His brief from the Hong Kong-based owner was to make her as light as possible inside and to keep her contemporary – nothing classic, nothing compressed.

The soft-shade pearwood panelling, laid

horizontally and defined by aluminium-coloured wooden bandings between the planks, is delightfully complemented by a light ash laminate sole. Most of the freestanding furniture is from such celebrated companies as Minotti and Poltrona Frau – items as comfortable as they are chic. The upholstery is a mix of cool white and brown leather and vivid cottons, while some of the lime greens and oranges echo the early 1970s.

The aft half of the main saloon is given over to seating, with plenty of sofas, chaise-





longues, armchairs and pouffes to spread around for comfortable relaxation. Half way down the main saloon to starboard, a dramatic flight of stairs rises to the enclosed flying bridge above and descends to the guest accommodation below. This eye-catching feature is constructed almost entirely from green-tinted toughened glass, including walls and stair treads some 17

millimetres thick, all held together by a minimal amount of stainless steel – joints, support rods and so on – and all RINA approved. A stainless steel bar, fronted by lime green panelling and several stools, is set immediately to port of the glass staircase, while the really stunning feature of this middle area is the sudden upwards sweep of the ceiling into space that on Planet 110

and 115 models would be filled by the raised pilothouse. The maximum ceiling height here approaches 4.5 metres – fantastic! Beyond the central area, the dining room is furnished with a large round table and elegantly simple Zanotta chairs. A semi-circular ‘bubble’ in the side glazing allows seated guests to appreciate the superb views on both sides.

A mosaic face of Napoleon stares down the 17 metre length of the main saloon, which is also notable for its stunning glass staircase

However, the main focus in this area is a Bisazza mosaic reproduction of the young Napoleon’s face by Canova. Indeed, this feature on the forward bulkhead commands attention the moment you walk into the main saloon as the face stares down the middle of the room from its position 17 metres from the

aft deck doors. A dayhead off the dining area occupies the space outboard of the glass staircase, with a door operated by a push-button code panel giving access to the outside without disturbing dinner guests.

The main saloon undoubtedly boasts superb views, but those from the upper

saloon are even better – virtually 360 degrees. In fact, views from a pilothouse like this could hardly be surpassed for passagemaking.

A central corridor connects the owner’s and guest cabins on the lower deck, and here the headroom is particularly impressive – around 2.2 metres everywhere. The spacious



Above: the tranquil owner's cabin stretches across the full beam amidships and includes a large bathroom with spa bath

full-beam owner's cabin aft benefits from excellent views on either side through the splendid semi-circular hull windows. The king-sized bed, which faces a large television screen, leaves ample room for a sofa. Beyond the bedroom, wardrobes are set to port and starboard and a Bisazza-tiled bathroom not only provides a spa bath and a separate shower but also a separate head. Amidships, two generous twin guest cabins are each fitted with extra Pullman berths, while forward, a comfortable VIP double is decorated in the same restful brown and cream tones as the owner's cabin.

The galley, which also serves as the crew

mess area, is forwardmost on the main deck, conveniently close to the dining area next door. Even more conveniently, it provides a door out to the starboard side deck. The crew accommodation, accessed by stairs that drop down forward from the galley, is well proportioned for a motor yacht of this size, providing three twin-bunk cabins and three shower rooms for up to six people.

A further surprise awaits in the engine room, where three C32 ACERT Caterpillars boast a combined output of almost 5,500hp. This means that despite a displacement of 145 tonnes fully loaded, the yacht achieves a top speed of almost 26 knots and cruises at

22 knots. Like the rest of the boat, the engine room has acoustic thermal insulation and the ceiling is covered with anti-dust fibreglass. The deep-V hull serves the yacht well when planing and at both semi-displacement and displacement speeds. The Long Range designation comes from the fact that, if driven on the middle engine alone, her range would be an impressive 1,400 nautical miles at a sustainable 12 knots. For that reason the middle engine outputs via a two-speed Reintjes reduction gearbox, while the wing diesels drive out through conventional Reintjes boxes.

As for onboard power, the 120S is well



Above: the VIP cabin blends browns, cream and lime green in its modern décor, while the garage (opposite) has room for an Italian supercar





Choo Choo's sailing grounds will encompass the exotic seas of south-east Asia

specified with twin 55kW Kohlers generators, ample for a long-range yacht requiring high levels of self-sufficiency. Being bound for hot-and-humid south-east Asia means that her tropicalised air-conditioning system in particular is likely to be working hard.

Choo Choo has one final surprise – her stern garage, where she stows a rather special 'tender', a 226mph (365kmph) Italian-built Edonis supercar. It weighs 1,300kg and is lifted in and out with a customised 1,500kg-capacity Mor Saverio crane system. With her garage tantalisingly half open during her public debut at the 2006 Cannes show, the 120S received more attention than any other boat. Without the car, the garage can accommodate a good-sized tender, while the foredeck is big enough for two large Sea-Doo water craft and their crane.

Outdoor arrangements on this first 120S Hard Top would not suit everyone. Although her flying bridge and bows have space for sunbathing, and the next model will provide a spa pool, most buyers of yachts of this size prefer more fun-in-the-sun space, whether flying bridge or sundeck. However, *Choo Choo* will be based in south-east Asia, where exposure to the sun is not popular, therefore, air-conditioned living and entertaining space is far more important, and this yacht will no doubt serve her purpose well. □

CHOO CHOO

LOA 36.25m	Freshwater capacity 3,500 litres	Construction GRP
LWL 30.5m	Grey/black water capacity 2,000 litres	Classification RINA # 100 A 1.1 "Y"
Beam 7.2m	Sewage system Hamann	Yacht management Euroyacht
Draught (under props) 2.25m	Fire-control system Cassiano	Naval architect New Versilcraft
Displacement (light/full load) 110/145 tonnes	Security systems Diginav	Exterior styling Alessandro Lombardi/ CLM Viareggio
Engines 3 x 1,825hp (1,343kW) C32 ACERT Caterpillars	Monitoring system Diginav	Interior designer Angelo Neri
Propellers ZF	Air-conditioning Marine Air System	Broker Cavendish White, UK Tel: +44 (0)20 7381 7600 E-mail: uk@ cavendishwhite.com
Speed (max/cruise) 26/22 knots	Communication/ navigation electronics Simrad	Charter n/a
Fuel capacity 30,000 litres	Entertainment systems Sharp, Sony, Bose	Charter rates n/a
Range 1,400nm at 12 knots	Owner and guests 8 (10)	Builder/year New Versilcraft/2006
Thrusters American Bow Thruster	Crew 6	Address Via Aurelia Sud 316/a 55049 Viareggio (LU) Italy
Stabilisers American Bow Thruster, Star System TRAC 300 zero-speed	Tender 5.3m Castoldi Jet	Contact Tel: +39 0584 388275 E-mail: info@versilcraft.com Web: www.versilcraft.com
Generators 2 x 55kW Kohlers	Tender-launching system Mor Saverio, 1,500kg crane	Price guide €9.35 million
Watermakers Idromar MC3 Duplex, 180 litres per hour	Passerelle Mor Saverio	
	Paint Du Pont Marine Systems	

