



MAD MAX

STORY: ALESSANDRO VITELLI

PHOTOS: BILLY BLACK

If ever a motor yacht gave the lie to her name, it is *Mad Max*. While the name might evoke visions of crazed post-apocalyptic wild men racing around in spare-parts vehicles on the movie screen, the reality is far gentler. The owners' four-year old grandson's name is, that's right, Max. And there is absolutely no suggestion of anything having to do with spare parts about this 67ft 7in Lyman Morse. On the contrary!

Way up the St. George's River in Thomaston, Maine, Lyman Morse has been quietly going about its business building exquisitely crafted yachts since...well, it's hard to say. Schooners and full-rigged ships were launched from the same site in the 19th century, followed by Friendship sloops and other fishing craft; the name Morse Shipbuilding was respected everywhere. In 1978, Cabot Lyman bought the company, added his name to it, and got into yacht building, maintaining that respect along the way.

Subtle sailing details such as dorade boxes for deck vents and proper, large-diameter steering wheels demonstrate Lyman Morse's commitment to quality boat building.

So it should be no surprise that when *Mad Max's* owners, who hail from San Francisco, wanted to build a traditional yet state-of-the-art motor yacht, they decided to commission Lyman Morse to do it, after visiting several East Coast builders. Designer Douglas Zurn was brought into the project early on, in what turned out to be an inspired choice. Zurn combines an eye for the overall effect of a yacht's profile with an obvious understanding of the importance of design details.

Mad Max in profile has a subtle but unmistakable rear-leaning stance, as if ready to leap into a sprint. In some ways, her overall shape reminds me of those long-standing favorites of mine, the old Huckins yachts of that builder's post-PT boat days; but where they had all angles and sharp edges, *Mad Max's* lines flow harmoniously, with sweet curves and radiuses from stem to stern. Looking at her cabin trunk, forward of the deckhouse, an artful break accented by a varnished eyebrow, divides it into two sections – the forward lowered part meeting the upward sweep of the sheer at the bow. A slight hip relieves the sides of the deckhouse; visually inspired, but practical as well, it allows more room for negotiating the narrow side decks. The stainless-steel rail forward is oval in section, a small detail

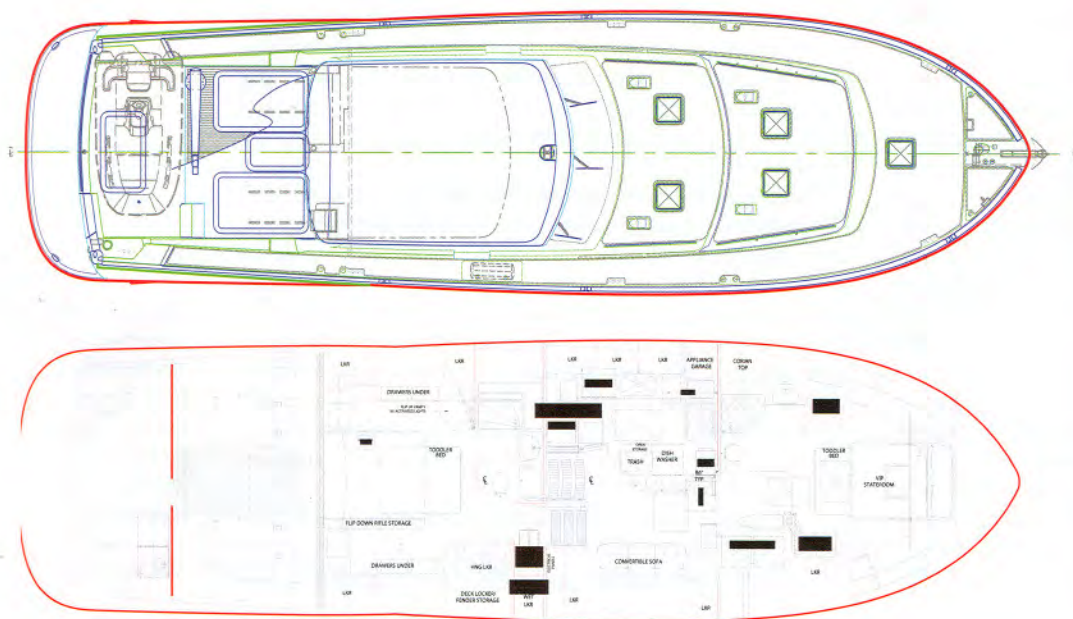
perhaps, but in keeping with the overall design. I'm not so sure about the radar arch; it seems too jarring an interruption of the yacht's harmonious lines. Then again, I'm also not so sure how I would change it, and radar arches are a perennial and vexing design problem, especially in smaller boats. Anyway, I have a weakness for cream yellow hulls like this one – the radar arch can stay as it is.

The owners' interior design requirements were straightforward. They wanted a feeling of open space, and were happy with just two staterooms – theirs, and one for guests. You can stand at the aft end of the owners' stateroom, located under the deckhouse, and see clear through to the forward bulkhead in the guest quarters forward. Three trundle-style berths ensure that grandson Max and friends can cruise in unapocalyptic comfort. *Mad Max* is finished inside with red birch veneers and solid cherry trim, an unusual and effective combination. Also unusual is the varnished cherry sole, where one would expect to find the more traditional teak.

The spaciousness of the open layout below is enhanced by wide companionways connecting the various spaces. The interior as a whole has an organic feel, each space flowing into

The seamless joinerwork aboard *Mad Max* meets the highest standards, while the open layout fosters a relaxed atmosphere.





the next seamlessly. When I review Lyman Morse yachts, I always devote some space to the quality of the interior joinerwork, to the point where it gets repetitious; *Mad Max*, unsurprisingly, gets top marks – enough said. But beyond the joinerwork, she also sports unusual touches, such as the cleverly engineered swing-away hinges on the side deck doors, and a superb stainless sculpture that forms the structure for the spiral stairs leading to the flybridge. It's almost a shame to cover it with wooden treads.

Living up to Lyman Morse's sailing tradition, the builder as usual incorporated sailing yacht details, such as dorade boxes for all deck vents and proper large-diameter steering wheels. The teak decks are beautifully detailed, and obvious thought has been devoted to keeping everything functional. The lower level of the split aft cockpit serves as tender storage (why spoil her lines with a tender on the foredeck?), served by a folding electric davit. An electric winch on the starboard side deals with docklines.

Perhaps – although I suspect Lyman Morse might take slight umbrage at the notion – there is some vague resemblance to all that post-apocalyptic racing about after all: *Mad Max* is fast; not only that, she is amazingly agile for a 67ft 7in, fully found cruising yacht. She steps up on a plane and reaches 30 knots effortlessly, and can be tossed into turns with perfect control. At speed, there is no exhaust smell at all, due to well-engineered deck house aerodynamics and side exhausts. Her agility was evident at idle speed as well, as we slalomed through the dense thickets of lobster pots on the way to her sea trial. San Francisco Bay is in for a treat. |



Maine's 200-year boatbuilding tradition comes through in Lyman Morse yachts, whose 100 yard workers have made lifetime careers of building quality boats.

SPECS

LOA: 67ft 7in (20.6m)
LWL: 57ft 8in (17.2m)
Beam: 18ft 6in (5.15m)
Draft: 4ft (1.21m)
Displacement: 83,550lbs
Engines:
 2 x 1,000hp C18 Caterpillar Diesels
Propellers: Accutech 5-blade
Speed (max/cruise): 31/21 knots
Fuel capacity: 1,760 gallons
Range: 583nm @ 21 knots
Bow thruster: Arcturus Marine TRAC
Stabilizers: N/A
Generators:
 2 x 25kW and 12kW Northern Lights
Watermakers: Sea Recovery
Freshwater capacity: 460 gallons
Security systems: Seacoast
Monitoring system: N/A
Fire control system: Fireboy-Xintex
Air-conditioning: Marine Air
Communication/Navigation electronics:
 Raymarine
Entertainment systems: Sony, JVC, Sirius, KVH
Owner and guests: 6
Crew: N/A
Tender: Williams turbojet 325
Tender-launching system:
 Steelhead Marine SM1500R
Passerelle: N/A
Paint: Awlgrip, "Fighting Lady Yellow"
Construction: SCRIMP infused hull with vinylester resin, hand-laid deck with vinylester resin
Price guide: Upon request
Classification: ABS guidelines
Naval architecture: Zurn Yacht Design
Exterior styling: Zurn Yacht Design
Interior design: Zurn Yacht Design/Lyman Morse Boatbuilding
Builder/Year:
 Lyman Morse Boatbuilding/2008
 84 Knox Street
 Thomaston, ME 04861
 Tel: (207) 354-6904
 Email: jb@lymanmorse.com
 www.lymanmorse.com