

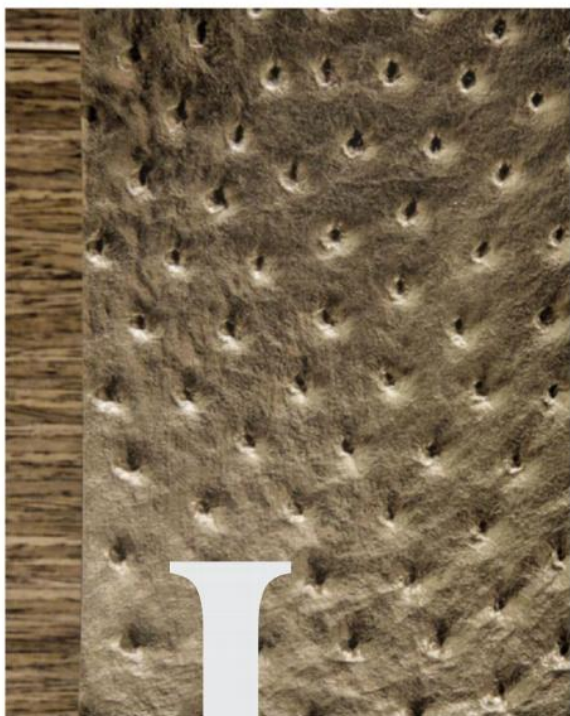
ROYAL JEWEL



THE 80 FROM BRITISH BUILDER PEARL
SHINES WHEN IT COMES TO INTERIOR STYLE AND EXTERIOR SPACE.
by kevin koenig



Wide side decks and beefy side rails are just a few of the features that make this yacht tenable for owner-operators.



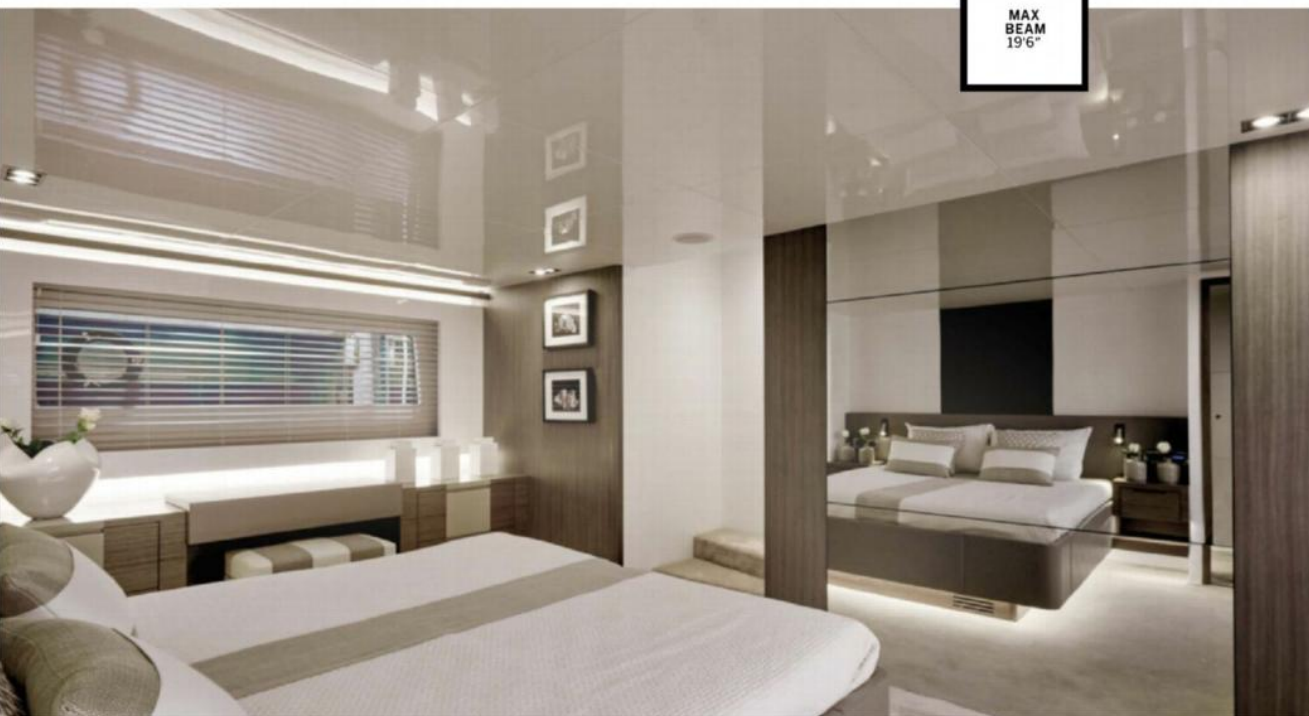
IF YOU HAVE YET TO HEAR OF ENGLAND'S **Pearl Yachts**, allow us to introduce you to a stylish, well-thought-out brand that's making a push into the American market. I recently tested the Pearl 80 on a blazing hot day in South Florida and was impressed with what I found. ¶ Pearl was founded in 1997 and has a strong foothold in Europe, with its largest dealership in Palma de Mallorca, Spain. The company builds its hulls and superstructures

in southern China and then ships the vessels to its other yard in Southampton, England, for what the builder refers to as the "fluff and buff." The 80 I tested was Hull No. 1 of the new model, which is designed by Bill Dixon and fits in the builder's lineup between a 65 and a 95. ¶ The 80 is intelligently spec'd for the way American yachtmen typically like to cruise. The dining room tables that usually morph into giant key trays are gone, because most Americans prefer to eat outside. There's a Bluetooth system, upgraded air conditioning for South Florida summers and a 100-amp shore-power cord. A Seakeeper 16 handles stabilization duties, while a hot tub on the flybridge with a waterfall and LED backlighting is a mega-yacht touch. ¶ The interior design in the salon and on the accommodations level also has a distinctly American ambience. Pearl aimed to make the salon to feel like an open and airy Manhattan loft (a sensation the missing table helps to create). The soft beiges

COMING SOON: PEARL 95

Pearl had plans to announce a new flagship — a 95 — at the Cannes Yachting Festival in September. Like the 80, that yacht will have a Kelly Hoppen interior and Bill Dixon exterior. However, it will have the master stateroom on the main deck, and a beach club in the transom to rival the setups aboard mega-yachts.

LOA
78'5"
MAX
BEAM
19'6"



and taupes on the accommodations level couple with windows to evoke the feeling of a cottage on Nantucket in New England. The interior designer for **Pearl Yachts** is Kelly Hoppen — stepmother to actress Sienna Miller and longtime designer for British powerhouse couple Victoria and David Beckham, known for their stylish taste. It's a point of pride at Pearl to have such a high-profile name on hand. ¶ The yacht's galley is another interesting space. Forward

and to port on the main deck, it has an electrically operated aft partition so that an owner or guest can be part of the conversation while cooking, also giving a professional chef privacy during onboard events. The boat's steeply raked windshield washes the galley — as well as the breakfast nook forward of it — in light. Vitrefrigo appliances are standard, and the oven looks big enough to cook a Thanksgiving turkey. (Perhaps another Americanization?) ¶ Down below, the yacht

INTELLIGENT DESIGN

Bill Dixon designed both the Pearl 80's exterior and her hull. His company, Dixon Yacht Design, is based on the Hamble River in Southampton, England, near Pearl's headquarters. Dixon designs sailing and motoryachts, and is perhaps best known for his mega-yachts, including the 148-foot Holland Jachtbouw *Heureka*, the 160-foot Royal Huisman *Antares* and the Johnson 105. Dixon also turns out smaller custom and production builds for companies such as Sealine, Azimut and Hylas. He has an eye for clean design and a knack for drawing reliable, seaworthy hulls.



The Kelly Hoppen-designed interior focuses on an open layout with soft colors to make relaxation key.



350

NAUTICAL MILES

Maximum Cruising Range At 20 knots

has a four-stateroom layout. The amidships master has a walk-in closet and a shower with nearly 16 square feet of space. A *boudoir* to port and a settee to starboard give the stateroom an at-home feeling of spaciousness. Moving forward is a design element that I can't recall ever seeing on any yacht: nearly identical guest staterooms to both sides of the yacht with windows facing into the companionway (with Venetian blinds for privacy). The windows open

the accommodations level immensely and help to create a highly memorable interior aesthetic. The final stateroom moving forward is the forepeak VIP with an athwartships berth, a walk-in closet, and nearly sole-to-ceiling mirrors at the foot of the bed, giving the illusion of even more space. ¶ Space is also considerable up on the flybridge. To my eye, being there felt like being aboard a yacht a good 10 feet longer. And the flybridge is fully wired for

KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL

The Pearl 80's galley, located abaft the helm to port, has an electric partition that opens into the salon, natural light, L-shaped counter space and a three-stool breakfast bar. It also has an interesting pedigree, being put together in Germany and then shipped to China to be installed in the yacht, which then goes back past Europe for finishing in England. And after all of that, the Pearl 80 that we were aboard then crossed the pond to get to America. Pearl Yachts says the labor costs work out favorably, and the builder gets the quality it wants. It's a tricky equation, but it works out for all.

DRAFT
5'3"
FUEL
CAPACITY
1,154 GAL.



entertaining. There's that aforementioned hot tub, plus a wet bar to port with an L-shaped counter with a hidden grill. Two settees with accompanying tables are also here, with forward sun pads for the bronzing set. More sun pads are on the foredeck, where there is also a U-shaped settee. This is the place to be when the yacht is moored stern-to and owners desire some privacy from prying eyes on the docks. The Fusion stereo system can play music here that is independent from whatever tunes are filling the rest of the yacht. ¶ While our test day didn't offer a whole lot in terms of interesting sea conditions, the Pearl still made a mark. She tracked straight and true, and her deep-V hull form (also Dixon designed) proved grippy as she breezed through S-turns. She got on plane right around 13.5 knots and topped out at 32.6 knots, a bit slower than the manufacturer's listed top-end of 35.2, but that could owe to a number of easily correctable

BORN AND RAISED

Southampton, England, where Pearl Yachts is based, has a long and storied nautical history. Every September, the Mayflower Marina hosts the Southampton Boat Show, one of the largest in Europe. Founded in 1997, the show attracts about 110,000 boating enthusiasts every year and is a major event for European builders. Notably, in 2005, show organizers brought in tons of sand to create a makeshift beach.

factors including load and prop adjustments. I cruised her mainly at 2,050 rpm doing 26 knots, a speed at which her engines purred. ¶ And I do mean purred. The boat was exceptionally quiet in terms of engine noise, creaks and groans, a testament to her solid build. Power plants on board the test boat were twin 1,800 hp MANs housed in a gleaming engine room with just shy of 6 feet of headroom and good access to both the engines and the twin 20 kW Kohler gensets. ¶ The yacht showed some peppy speed numbers for a vessel in this class, and she drove with a sporty feel that the low-profile lines and sharply raked side windows enhanced. As I sliced her through the ocean, I could see in my mind's eye how graceful she must have looked from a distance, whether here or splashing across the Atlantic from Southampton to her new home waters. ●

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The flybridge spans almost half the length of the yacht, with the aft portion shading the cockpit seating below. Note the wide opening in the hardtop.