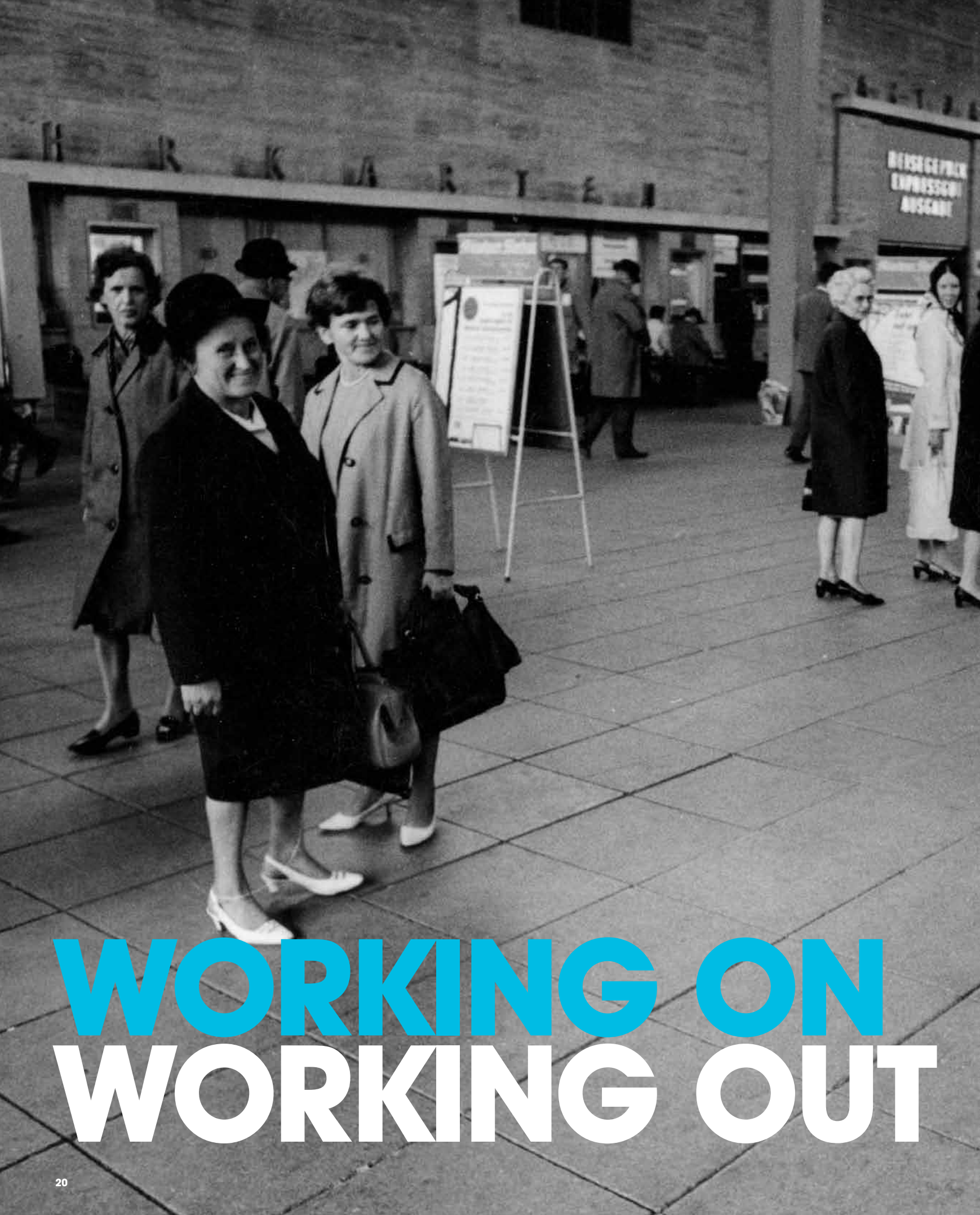


# SUPERYACHT DESIGN

INTERIORS ■ DESIGN ■ EXTERIORS ■ ARCHITECTURE ■ SPACE

DRAUGHTSMAN WITH A FIRM OF ARCHITECTS REQUIRED ME TO PRODUCE HUNDREDS OF BEAUTIFUL HAND DRAWN PLANS AND ELEVATIONS. JUST HANDLING THESE PRINTS AND STUDYING THEM TO MAKE SURE ALL THE DETAILS HAD BEEN PICKED MADE ME APPRECIATE THE CRAFT AND ARTISTRY OF THE DRAWINGS THEMSELVES, EVEN BEFORE NOTICING THE INFORMATION THEY CONVEYED. MORE OFTEN THAN NOT, CLIENTS WOULD ASK FOR THE ELEVATION DRAWINGS OF THEIR PROJECT TO BE FRAMED, SO THEY COULD BE HUNG IN THE FINISHED BUILDING. THESE DRAWINGS ALL TOLD A STORY: FROM MADE AND SKETCHES DOODLED AS DETAILS WERE WORKED OUT, A IDEA HERE OR A PERSPECTIVE THAT SKETCHED DOWN TO EXPLAIN WHAT THE ARCHITECT ENVISAGED, OR TO HELP THE CLIENT DO THE SAME.





# WORKING ON WORKING OUT

# FIT SPACE

With a few notable exceptions, gym design aboard large yachts is usually a case of simply converting a guest cabin or plonking a treadmill on the sundeck. But Mark Healy and David Stammers of Space Concepts encourage a more holistic approach to onboard work-out spaces. Here they discuss the issues associated with bespoke gyms and the negative impact of 'afterthought' designs.

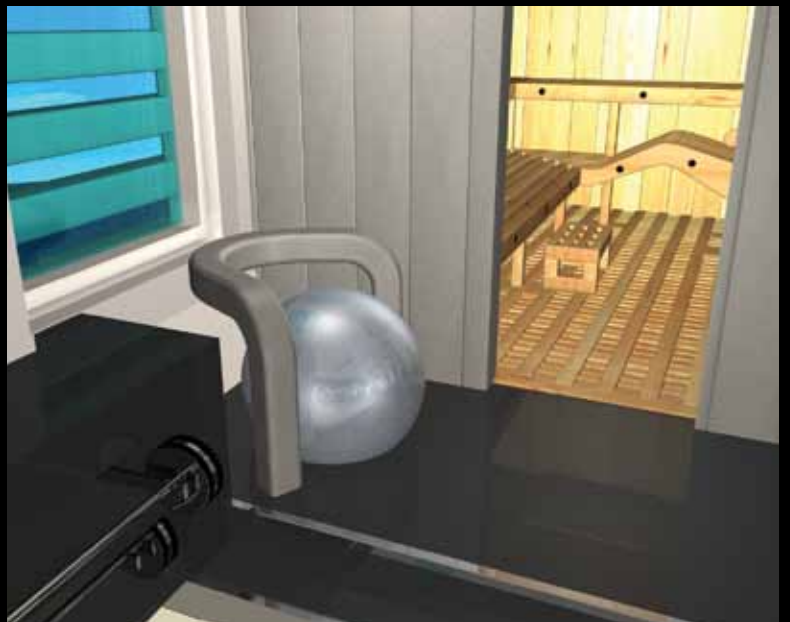




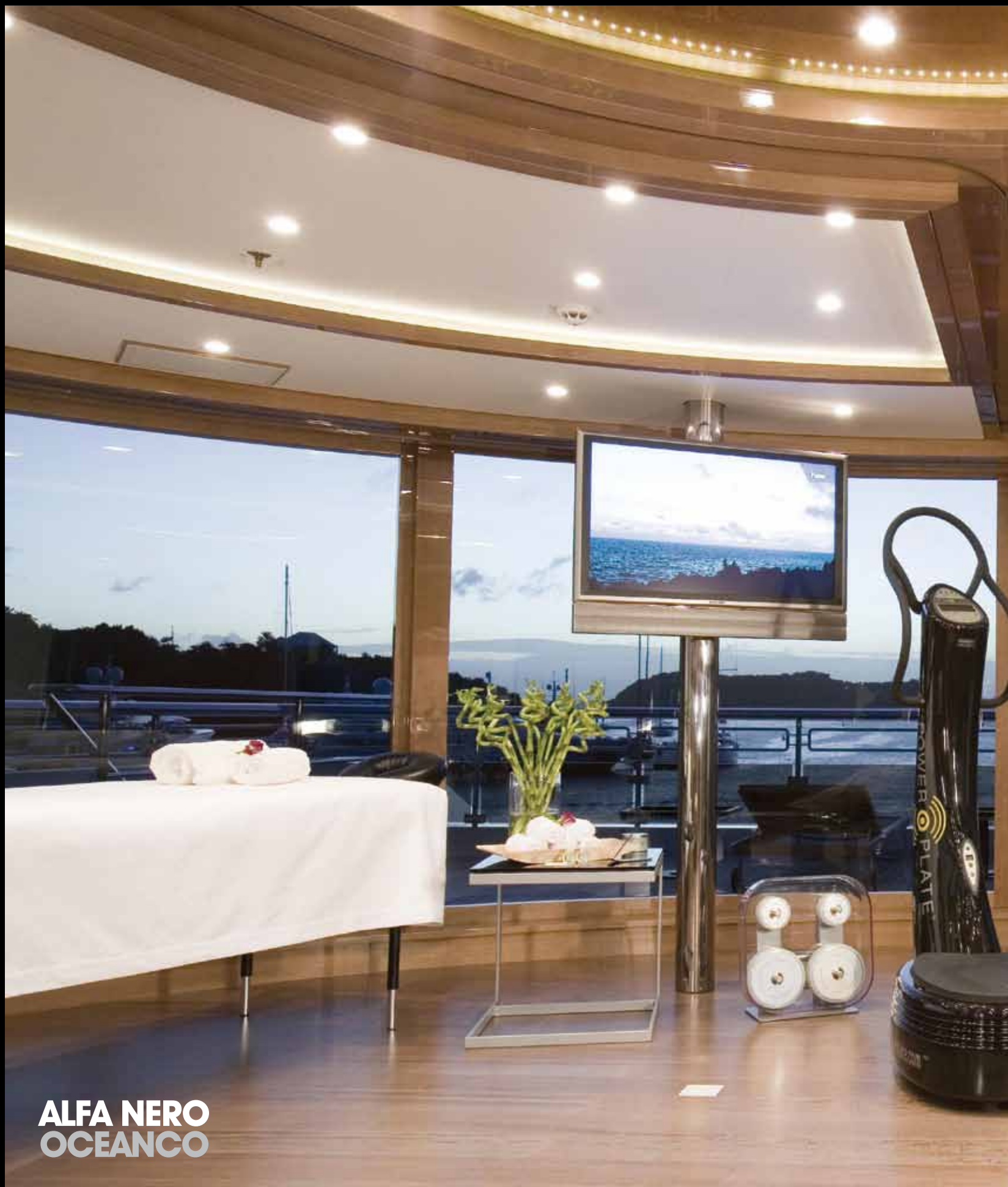


**This page: various  
onboard gym layouts  
from Mark Healy and  
David Stammers of  
Space Concepts.**

**Facing page: a boxing  
ring that doubles as a  
nightclub designed for a  
client in Moscow.**







**ALFA NERO**  
**OCEANCO**







ABILITY  
CRN





In an era where healthy living and wellbeing are mainstream concerns, it is hardly surprising that owners and charter guests are investing time and money in taking care of their appearance. Their personal fitness routines have never been so important. Weight loss and general toning are still the main reasons behind this long-term interest, but increasingly individuals 'hit the gym' just to de-stress from their hectic work schedule. Many of these people are jetting the globe and this physically demanding lifestyle, combined with the inherent stresses of business, can take its toll. They therefore realise the importance of maintaining a healthy body and mind and are structuring a workout into their daily routines. These routines are not forgotten while on holiday, hence the emergence of fitness spaces aboard yachts.

Increasingly, we find our clients appreciate the added value that considered gym design can provide. In our experience, gyms in general are far from reaching their full potential, but this failing is often more apparent on yachts because they are in such stark contrast and close proximity to their luxurious surroundings. They appear to be (and often are) an afterthought by the designer or a last-minute whim of the owner. Seemingly squeezed into any spare corner, they are furnished with a choice of equipment that happens to fit without requiring major alterations, often with negative results. "My experience of gyms is mainly banging my head against the deckhead panels on step machines!", confirms Simon Burt of John Winterbotham & Partners. Clearly, this falls short of the exceptional luxury that typifies the rest of the interior.

As any fitness professional will tell you, there is so much more to gym design than simply selecting various pieces of equipment to fill the given space and presuming that this will be sufficient to cater for all ages and abilities. This is a specialised field and interior designers and owners alike are beginning to appreciate the benefits of qualified consultants, from the big players such as Technogym and Life Fitness, to the smaller but independent companies like us at Space Concepts.

Although we work closely with the interior design team to ensure that an onboard gym has a visual relationship with the rest of the interior design, it should also be markedly different. For example, if not as luxurious as the rest of the yacht interior, a gym should be at least as beautifully finished. Its interior styling and lighting should help to remove the user from the comfort zone present in other areas and be more conducive to physical training. On walking into a gym, the design should capture the imagination and the layout should suggest the flow from one area to another, from one piece of equipment to the next. In the bespoke atmosphere of a superyacht there is no reason why a client should be content with the sterile combination of blonde wood floors, mirrored walls and harsh down-lighting.

"Careful use of lighting, and in particular lighting control, can further enhance the look and feel of a gym environment", explains Mike Gibbons, Operations Director at Sensory International, the UK-based home automation consultant. "Pre-configured lighting scenes can be used to create a mood or feeling that is in tune with the exercise activities that are taking place, which when used together with the audio-visual aspects can create an extremely stimulating environment."

As an independent company, we have the advantage of being able to specify equipment from a range of different manufacturers, which allows us to choose the right hardware for the job. However, an issue with this is the varying styles, colours and materials used by different manufacturers. Where necessary these different pieces of kit can be adapted to give the impression they are from the same stable, or they can be branded specifically to the yacht by re-upholstering, chromium-plating and powder-coating various components, fabricating new composite body panels, etc.

## Why go to the trouble of installing an expensive machine if the owners always avoid it?

But the factors to take into account during the equipment selection process, go beyond mere aesthetics. They include health implications, such as contra-indications and various physical disorders that can be exacerbated by certain exercises. For example, although it is one of our favourite pieces of equipment, we would avoid rowing machines for owners with persistent back problems. We would also recommend a recumbent bike machine rather than an upright version for those with high-blood pressure or general cardiovascular problems.

There is also the obvious exclusion of unpopular equipment — why go to the trouble of installing an expensive machine if the owners always avoid it? Rather than simply gathering dust, it can easily be substituted for others ►



**XANADU  
BENETTI**



on the market that are likely to be more appreciated. Popular alternatives to more mundane equipment include the fashionable Power Plate vibrating platform that provides a relatively passive way of keeping in shape. Alternatively, Technogym has created the Kinesis range, a stylish and functional apparatus that is becoming extremely popular among professional athletes and private users of all abilities.

"Kinesis provides a unique workout that restores the right balance between mind and body", its manufacturers maintain, "thereby helping to improve your quality of life."

## ...multi-functionalism makes perfect sense as a way of maximising the use of space...

To the trained eye, there is often a needless replication of gym equipment. When working within the limited space available aboard a yacht, this obviously is not the best way to proceed. So during the consultation process it is important to establish who will be the primary users, discuss their medical backgrounds and any other conditions that may be relevant to the selection of equipment. Old injuries, chronic complaints or hereditary conditions need to be taken into account when choosing the optimal equipment list for the client.

Also to be considered are the additional requirements of charter guests and their high expectations of gym facilities. For chartering purposes the gym has to offer equipment that will cater to a broad range of age groups and preferences. Cardiovascular machines are always popular and have a fundamental role to play in any workout, but each type of machine works the body in a specific way. Simply installing a top-of-the-range treadmill does not necessarily mean you are offering a facility for everyone to raise his or her heart rate. One has to take into account other issues such as knee problems, elderly users and sea conditions - would a static bike,

for instance, be a better alternative to a treadmill for use while under way in rolling seas?

Next are the design considerations associated with resistance machines and free weights, which can be just as complex. Multi-gyms are fantastic space-saving units, but often result in training partners having to wait their turn, which can interrupt the flow of the training session. A selection of barbells and dumbbells and a bench are sometimes a useful addition, but inexperienced users can be more prone to injury and care should be taken to ensure they are securely fixed down while at sea.

Compared to most land-based projects, square meterage is obviously at a premium on the majority of yachts. In this context, multi-functionalism makes perfect sense as a way of maximising the use of space and its appeal to a broader range of users.

As an example of this approach, prior to the recent change in *The Maltese Falcon's* ownership, Space Concepts drew up a proposal for a new gym layout [Mark Healy was formerly the Personal Trainer & Sports Therapist aboard *The Maltese Falcon*, Ed.]. Taking into the account the size and shape of the gym, its proximity to the master stateroom and her busy charter programme, we recommended that expanding on the potential usage of this space would offer the greatest returns.

As a small yet adequate facility, it seemed an obvious step to improve the gym's equipment list and layout, while adapting the space to cater for beauty treatments too. We utilised the limited size and shape of the gym to our advantage by creating zones in the 'arms' of the room. These housed storage units, a treadmill and a cross-trainer, which felt overpowering in the space available. By adding a raised floor to the level of the running belt and adapting its grab rail and console, very little of the floor area was taken up by the unit when not in use. This meant there was room for an exercise bike, also set into the floor, and a spacious feel still remains in this area.

With the equipment placed in these 'arms', a central space that doubles as a floor-work area and mini spa was created. By then repositioning storage cupboards from the outboard areas to a more central position, we were able to incorporate a space-saving, fold-out massage table and workout bench that doubles as a beautician's station to increase the usage of the room. With back-lit drapes drawn across to hide the exercise equipment and an audio-visual installation supplied by specialists Sensory International to set the mood, the room is set for a relaxing pampering session. These additions addressed comments raised by charter guests, not only aboard the *Falcon* but also by those on other high-profile charter vessels.







“Carefully specified audio-visual equipment can enhance the gym experience when installed in sympathy with the interior design and overall equipment layout”, comments Mike Gibbons. “Speakers and displays should be positioned to be discreet yet functional, allowing audio and video content to work together as an integral part of the gym experience rather than a distraction.”

Yoga and Pilates often play their part in exercise routines. These both offer very real help to common problems suffered by many. Whether it is the controlled and calming effects of regular yoga classes, or the back-strengthening exercise of Pilates, these disciplines need to be catered for in any modern gym and can be done so quite easily by a designated padded floor area.

In a recent gym interior featuring one of these padded areas, we decided to place this on a central raised platform to give balance to the room. Large enough for two people, with a mirror above, it is the perfect area for general stretching and yoga, while also providing space for a Power Plate. This ‘stage’ has a secondary use: flanked by large plasma screens and surrounded by discreet disco lighting, the padded area can easily be transformed into a Wii Rockband stage for the client’s children to enjoy.

Multifunctional design such as this is desirable aboard any yacht. In this context, the designer should endeavour to provide the client with more than just a space to work out. We also try to understand the needs of individuals and cater for their requirements and lifestyles, which often results in a funky twist to conventional solutions. Working with a Moscow-based architect to create a boxing gym within a private club, for example, we provided the client with his ultimate entertainment environment by combining a boxing ring that transforms into a dance floor.

To conclude, modern gym design not only requires in-depth knowledge of fitness training and equipment, but also current trends. In addition, first-hand experience of the yachting industry and an understanding of the quality expected by owners and charter guests alike is imperative to bring gym design into line with the high standards of today’s superyachts.

---

*To comment on this article email  
comments@superyachtdesign.com  
with subject ‘Fit Space’*

---