



DANA JINKINS

The Interior Designer

Formally trained in industrial design, Joe Artese has a career spanning much of the recreational-marine universe, from mass-produced FRP sloops, to big custom cold-molded ketches, to supersize alloy-and-steel motoryachts.

by Dan Spurr

Above—Multi-faceted skylights are an Artese signature: he has specified them in residences and office buildings as well as in yachts. Here, on the Bruce King-designed *Signe*, sunlight coming into the saloon adds an unexpected element to the decor.

Designer and stylist Joe Artese has a thing about skylights. Always did. Back in the 1970s, between jobs, he spent three years in Houston, Texas, tearing out the ceiling of his parents' house and installing seven large, multifaceted skylights.

Years later, during a collaboration with designer Bruce King on the award-winning 100/30.4m custom sailing yacht *Signe* (see "Large-Scale Cold-Molding,"

Professional BoatBuilder No. 51, page 36), he created a skylight around the massive mizzenmast, at the partners. When Artese asked the boat carpenters at the Thomaston, Maine, shop that built *Signe*, what was the most difficult part of installing the skylight, one of the men replied in a heavy Maine accent, "The impossible paht."

Artese just chuckles at that. As far as he's concerned, nothing is impossible.



ED HOLT (BOTH)

If he can dream it, he'll find someone who can engineer and build it.

West to East and Back Again

Joe Artese was born on New Year's Eve, 1938, in Martinez, California, the son of a Shell Oil Co. engineer. His early years were spent in the greater Los Angeles area, until 1955, when his father was transferred to Shell's New York City office. The family lived in Westport, Connecticut, where Artese graduated from high school—without, to his father's chagrin, any idea what he wanted to do next. So he enrolled at the University of Bridgeport, which turned out to have a good industrial design department. Artese spent three years there before “getting caught up in other things,” which led to a job at a design office in Manhattan. The three-man firm specialized in trade-fair design—mechanical drawings for everything from concrete footings in the ground to all the signage and other graphics—for the U.S. State Department, in Poland, Germany, Peru, and elsewhere.

In 1962 Artese returned to California and right away was hired by Douglas Aircraft, in its Interior-Biomechanical Group, where he worked on the first DC-9 for American Airlines. He was also taking night classes at the Art Center in Los Angeles. When the first plane was finished, his job ended, and he found employment in the Aeronutronic Division of Philco-Ford, in Newport Beach. One interesting Vietnam War-era project there was the XM-140 automatic weapon mounted

on the bellies of UH-1B “Huey” helicopters.

Artese tells what happened next: “My chief engineer, Doug Starkweather, who was an avid sailor, took a job at Columbia Yachts. I was very much against the Vietnam War and didn't like working in a military environment, so I told Doug, ‘Take me with you.’ He said, ‘Okay. Let's go.’ We cleaned out our desks and left the building and went over to Columbia in Costa Mesa. Columbia was just coming up; they were doing ‘floating Clorox bottles.’ Dick Valdez's marketing theory was to advertise a boat at the lowest possible price. So, as his new in-house designer, if I made any attempt to embellish the product, Dick would pull me aside and say, ‘Joe, we do *not* build *boats* here. We *make* money! Drawers *cost* money!’

“At Columbia it took a week to design the basic boat. ‘Let's put the chain-locker bulkhead about here and measure back six-three [1.8m] for the V-berth. Put a hanging locker and a head in three feet [0.9m] of space; the rest of it is a dinette and galley. Whatever's left we'll make into a quarter berth. Oh, and the ad guys want drawings by the end of the week!’

“It just turned out to be very unstimulating,” Artese says.

He lasted two years, but during that time Artese and Starkweather designed a tricked-out Columbia 36 (10.8m) with a trim tab and other experimental goodies. The two built the boat themselves, and pushed it through the line off-hours, learning fiberglass, joinerwork, and all the other production

Artese asked King to engineer a second large skylight for Signe—seen on deck (**above left**) and below (**above**)—through which the yacht's 80'-tall (24m) mizzenmast could be stepped. King's solution: bronze tubing (schedule 40) to transfer the loads out to the deckbeams.

techniques. They campaigned the yawl every weekend in offshore races known as the Whitney Series.

Ken Smith, Columbia's regional sales manager, was then hired as president by Islander Yachts and brought Artese along with him as an independent contractor. In the late 1960s and early '70s, Costa Mesa was the epicenter of mass-produced fiberglass sailboats. But there were no assembly lines at Islander; what the company had was a cluster of open sheds, and much of the work took place outdoors. By today's standards some of the methods were quite crude.

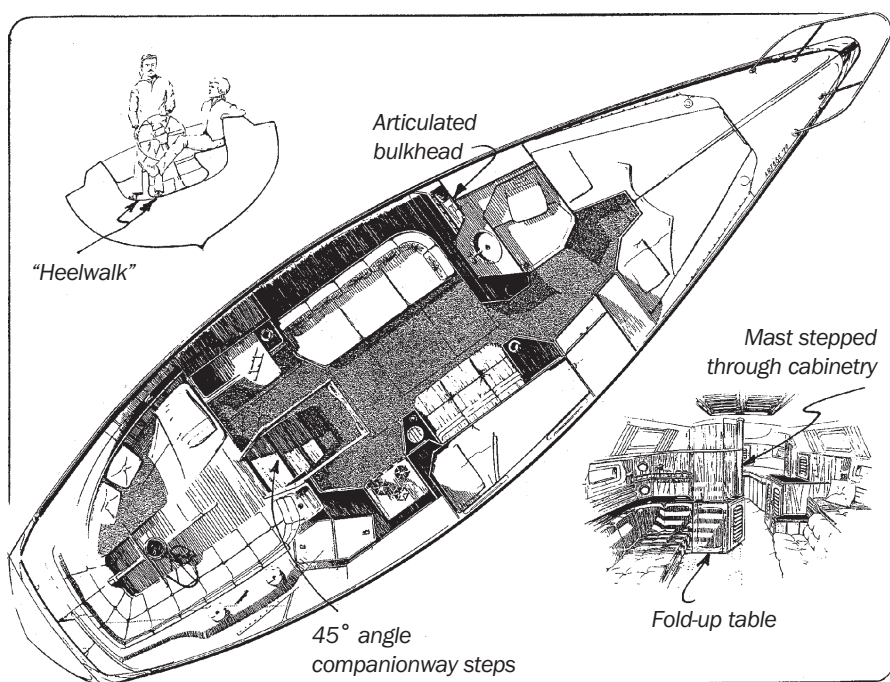
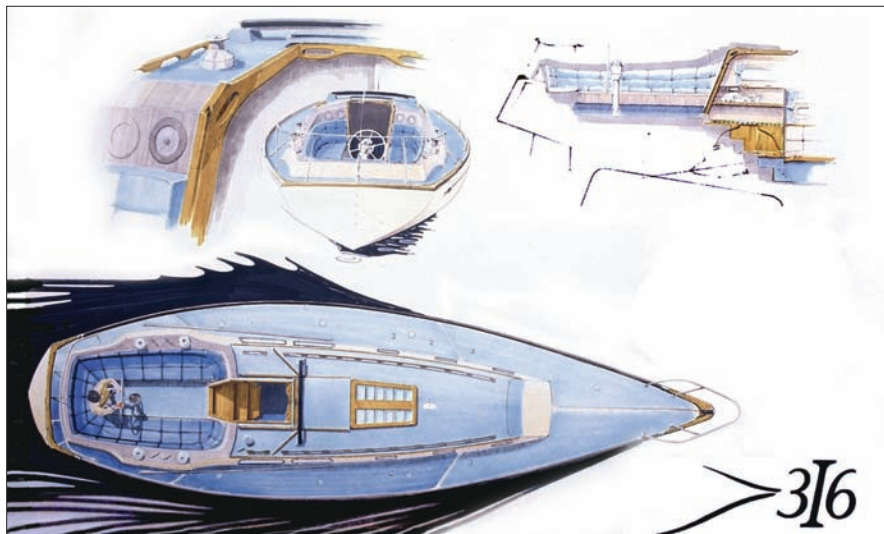
"There was fiberglass chop all over the place," Artese recalls. "The guard dogs would dump wherever, and in the morning the guys wouldn't pick it up; they'd just shoot glass over it. Every two or three months someone would come in with a skip loader and haul it all out."

Smith was a graduate of the Chouinard Art Institute, in Los Angeles (now California Institute of the Arts) and, according to Artese, had a "design consciousness," telling Artese, "Joe, this industry needs people like you."

That was a defining comment for the up-and-coming Artese, because until then, there really were no stylists, no interior designers as such, engaged in production boatbuilding. Even in large yachts, interior design at the time was done mainly by naval architects, who often had little eye for style and decor. All of which began to change with the advent of Joe Artese. Smith offered Artese three boats to style, which would allow him to create a "family" identity for the product line.

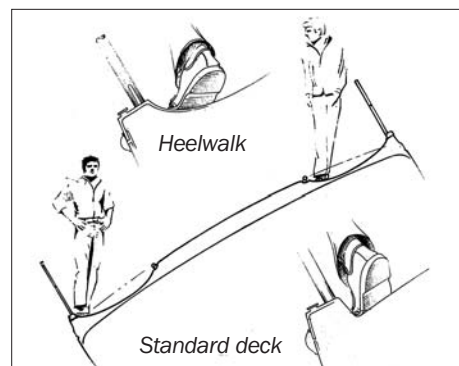
Smith commissioned yacht designer Alan Gurney to do two of the boats. Gurney, who'd made a name for himself with the maxi *Windward Passage*, would design the hulls and rigs of 36' (11m) and 40' (12.2m) performance sloops, and Artese was given carte blanche with the rest: deck styling, and the interior. Smith also commissioned a third boat, from Charlie Davies, a 40' motorsailer with a center cockpit and large aft cabin.

First up was the Islander 36, for which Artese designed the interior, covestripe, deck, and cockpit—and the result was radical. "Islander was losing \$40,000 a month and they needed a blockbuster to



Thanks to Artese, the Islander 36 (11m) incorporated a number of innovative features not seen before on production fiberglass sailboats. **Top**—The cockpit coamings sweep up to meet the companionway, and the main bulkhead is angled to make a comfortable backrest.

Center—The companionway ladder is raked at 45° so crew can go below facing forward; the saloon table folds against the bulkhead; and the mast is stepped through cabinetry. **Bottom**—The "heelwalk" feature, at top and center, has a near-horizontal surface when the boat heels, providing surer footing than the standard deck, at bottom.

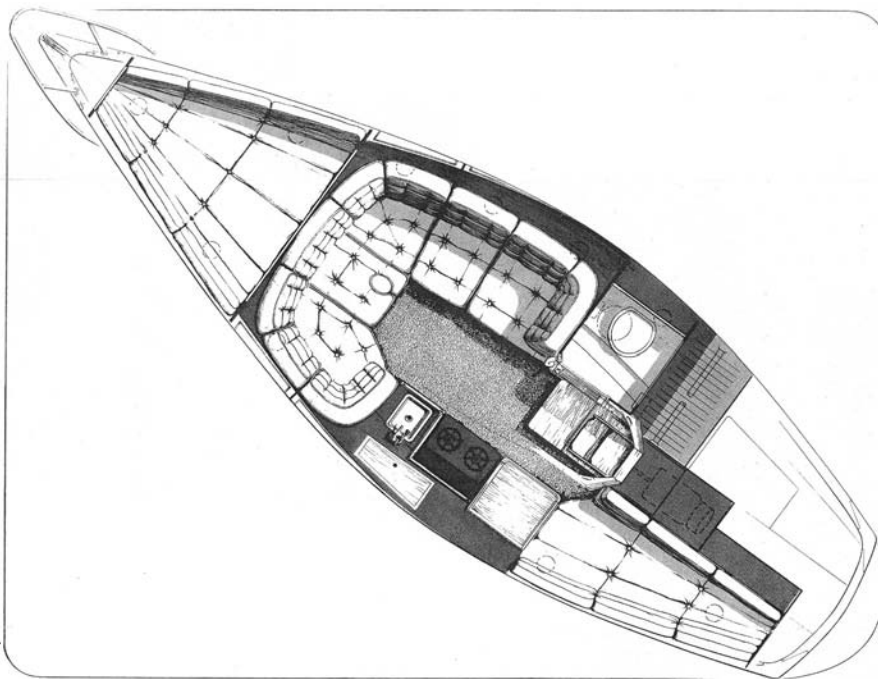


JOE ARTESE DESIGN (ALL)

impact the market," Artese says.

Among his innovations: what Artese called a "heelwalk" feature;

that is, a cockpit or cabin sole, or deck contoured so its surfaces are closer to horizontal when the boat is heeled. A second Artese contribution: angling the bulkhead between the cockpit and interior to be a comfortable backrest. A third: kicking out the



Invited by S&S co-founder Olin Stephens to assist with the interior of the Yankee 26 (7.9m), Artese challenged convention by moving the large J-shaped dinette forward and the head aft. This arrangement soon found favor among production powerboat designers as well.

companionway ladder to 45° so crew can walk down facing forward. And a fourth: sculpting the arms of the winch islands up into a flowing curve to make it work aesthetically, as well as to better accommodate the sheet leads. The latter detail in particular was considered extremely difficult to execute.

Working all this out took some 700 hours, and didn't exactly enamor Artese to his co-workers, who were also new to Islander and jockeying for position. Ken Smith pushed the 36 through, despite an in-house rebellion. The end result: more than 750 units sold, an unusually high number for production sail.

Yacht designer Robert Perry (see PBB No. 97) says the Islander 36 was a breakthrough boat, taking "a boy's cabin in the woods" and turning it into a yacht. An I-36 owners association is active to this day; its San Francisco Bay fleet alone numbers 250 members.

Fighting for a Fee

During development of the Islander 36, Ken Smith had a heart attack, and a new management team came in. The verbal agreements with Artese to design the remaining two boats went out the window, and it would

be 10 years before his name would be connected with his first baby, the I-36. The in-house team developed Gurney's 40 and Davies's motorsailer, but neither sold well. When Hank McCormack came on board as head of marketing he called Artese in for help, signing a royalty agreement for a redesign of the motorsailer.

Artese scrapped the glass interior pan and lowered the cabin sole to allow a passageway with full headroom around the cockpit, thus connecting the accommodation spaces down below. The original tall cabin-top was lowered, and hull portlights at seating eye-level were installed in a dark hull band; the old parallelogram windows were deleted; and the transom windows were reworked. Artese's renderings hung on the walls of Islander's engineering department for a week awaiting a review by the new owner, who'd just purchased the company. Artese got another excited call from McCormack. "Joe, the new owner is ecstatic about the new design and wants to meet with you right away!"

Here is Artese's account of his first meeting with the company's new owner: "I was elated, thought I'd finally get the much needed recognition and my royalties! I walked

into the office trailer and after an initial exchange of pleasantries, the owner says, 'Well now, we're really impressed with what you did for the Islander 36. Its success is the reason I bought this company. However, I've never heard of anyone paying an interior designer a royalty, and I'm not going to be the first.' Nervous glances all around. He pulls a check out of his pocket for \$10,000 and says, 'Will you accept this in lieu of your royalty?' I said, 'No, we have an agreement. You're free to use the designs or not.'

Time went by; eventually Artese received a letter from Islander: "Dear Joe, We've decided not to use your design proposal." Soon thereafter, though, the boat was introduced as the Freeport 41 (12.5m). Artese: "They'd flipped my design right to left, but retained all the features, and debuted it at the Long Beach Boat Show."

Utterly frustrated with Islander, Artese went over to rival Jensen Marine, builder of Cal sailboats, also in Costa Mesa. The Ranger Yacht Division was managed then by Buster Hammond, who took Joe on a tour of the plant, including the mold shop where the deck plug for the new Gary Mull-designed Ranger 37 (11.2m) One-Ton sat, with conventional cabin sides. Artese hoped to sell Hammond the heelwalk concept, and showed him his drawings. Hammond said, "Why didn't I think of that? If you hadn't, I would have." Artese asked Hammond if he'd like to purchase rights, but Hammond declined.

Some months later, Artese opened a copy of *Yachting* magazine and was stunned to see a full-page ad showing the Ranger deck plug, which now incorporated the heelwalk concept, even quoting Hammond as saying he'd designed it "to provide a horizontal platform throughout the full range of heel"—the very wording that Artese had written on his drawings.

Artese didn't know what to do about the theft. Should he confront Hammond or let it go? Eventually Artese decided to pay Hammond a visit. The secretary announced him. Hammond, anticipating the reason for Artese's visit, opened his office door and beckoned Artese in.

Once inside, Hammond said to him, "Well, Joe, we didn't use *all* of it."

Artese takes some solace in knowing that his radical deck concept,

introduced on the Ranger One-Ton, opened the door for other designers to explore much more fluid, compound-curved forms no longer constrained by the two-dimensional limitations of plywood plug building.

America's Cup skipper Bill Ficker took an interest in Artese's sophisticated design approach on the I-36 and the heelwalk concept, and introduced Artese to Sparkman & Stephens co-founder Olin Stephens, who felt that 12-Meters didn't heel enough to justify incorporating the concept. Nevertheless, Stephens commissioned Artese to work with Yankee Yachts on the interior of its new 26-footer (7.9m). Artese gave it a unique "wraparound lounge" forward, moving the head and hanging locker aft, and reducing the main bulkhead to a ring bulkhead with privacy curtains, thereby opening up the space dramatically. Introduced at the Annapolis Boat Show, the Yankee 26 was well received. Artese says that within a year about a third of production sail- and powerboats in that size range were incorporating variations of his new layout.

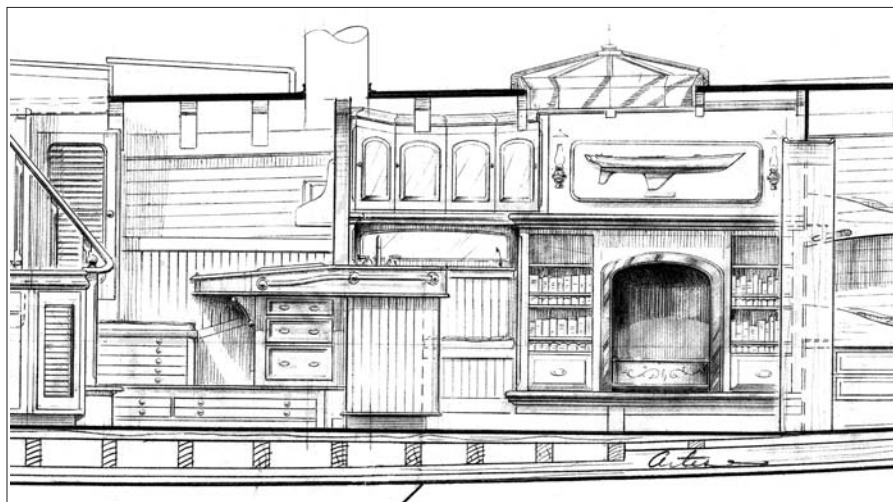
Now armed with several successful designs in his portfolio, Artese called on Bruce King, who was designing for Ericson Yachts at the time, working out of his Newport Beach office. Artese showed him a rendering of a multifaceted skylight on the deck of a sailboat.

King must have liked what he saw, because the two men began a collaboration that lasted years, and resulted in a number of highly acclaimed yachts.

The King Collaboration

As noted earlier, in the 1970s there were very few yacht stylists as such. Industrial designers had not yet looked toward yachting as a manufacturing sector where they might lend their talents. The early "names" in the field—the big three being Jon Bannenberg and John Munford, who began styling yachts in the late 1970s, and a decade later, Andrew Winch—were just getting established in this new field. (Bannenberg's initial large-yacht project was arguably *Lady Ghislaine*, built in 1986 by Amels, in The Netherlands. Winch opened his office that same year. Munford's debut yacht project was in 1978.)

At their initial meeting, Artese asked King if he had an interest in designing interiors, and King said he did not. For his part, Artese said he had no interest in designing hulls. So the two agreed



JOE ARTESE DESIGN



BENJAMIN MENDLOWITZ (BOTH PHOTOS)



to combine talents on custom boat projects. Artese had a commission to do the interior design of *Victoria*, a sistership to the 72' (22m) L. Francis Herreshoff-designed *Ticonderoga*. *Victoria*'s English walnut interior was under construction at the Kettenburg yard, in San Diego. King visited the project, and soon he and Artese were working together on the cold-molded

Top—Artese was having difficulty with the transition between Whitefin's saloon (right) and the nav station (left), in part because of a massive structural ring bulkhead between the two. During a phone conversation with his future wife, Sally Anne, she visualized a solution: an extension of the chart table that unites the two spaces.

Center—To bring light below on Whitefin, Artese installed not only skylights but many strategically placed hatches and dioptic deadlights, including one that refracts light through the lead crystal behind the wet bar.

Bottom—Whitefin under sail. She's one of a series of successful collaborations with designer Bruce King.

92' (28m) *Whitehawk*, built by O. Lie-Nielsen in Rockland, Maine—the first boat to incorporate Artese's multifaceted skylight; and then the cold-molded 90' (27m) *Whitefin*, custom built in Camden, Maine, under a tent on owner-builder Phil Long's tennis court. The year was 1982.

Long's challenge to Artese: "I want your finest artistic endeavor expressed in a 19th-century idiom." Artese specified: a large gem-like skylight amidships, over the saloon; a crystal cabinet placed such that the natural light from overhead deadlights would refract spectra through its facets; a sea rail with a little concavity on the back of the fiddle (he called it "Little Buddha"); the blending of features from one area to the next to create the illusion of greater space; a custom bronze fireplace with onyx inlays; and all joinerwork rendered in exquisitely detailed Honduras mahogany.

Whitefin was widely acclaimed, the largest wooden sloop to be built in three decades, and brought King and Artese more commissions. Next up was the 100' (30.4m) *Signe*. Artese flew east to meet with the owners, who had chartered *Whitefin* but told him little about their desires other than that their yacht ought to be a "celebration of wood." They handed him a check for \$40,000. "We're so glad you're available," the husband exuded. Artese was thrilled.

He went home and prepared a preliminary set of drawings that showed a traditional treatment, very similar to *Whitefin*, with, he said, "lots of flowing lines and curvilinear forms." But when he showed the drawings to the owners, the wife said, "No, no, no! This is not what I want. This looks just like *Whitefin*. I want something that ranges from traditional to contemporary, with stops in between, a surprise in every room...and an abundance of natural light."

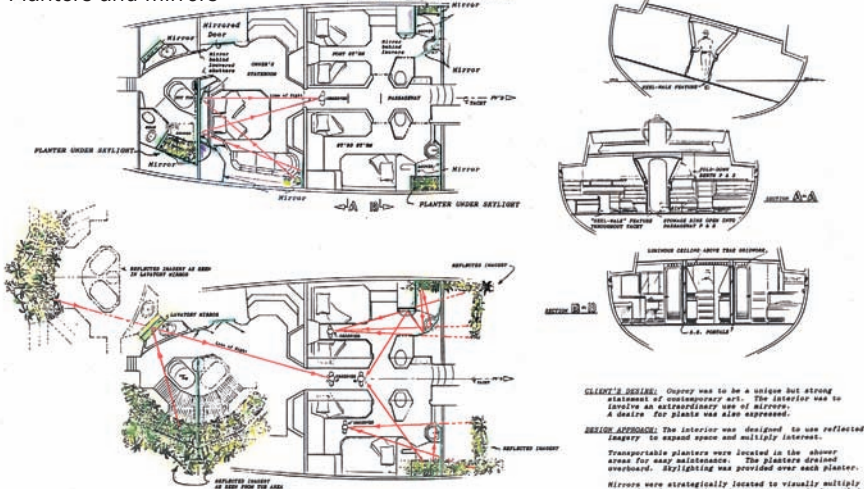
"That was my charge," says Artese, laughing now. "There was a bit of a problem, though, because at that point in time, Bruce's driving force was to produce the penultimate traditional sailboat. He'd even moved to Maine. And yet the client wanted contemporary touches, which of course threw a wrench in the works.

"To satisfy her desire for the modern touch," Artese continues, "I put the sea rail back on a 30° angle, so



DEBRA LEX

Planters and mirrors



Reflected imagery

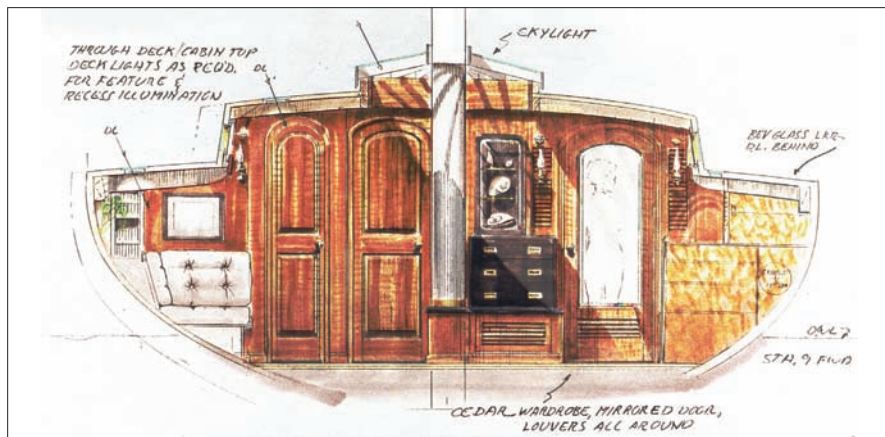
Top—For the 96' (29m) *Golden Osprey* (ex-Golden Odyssey), Artese designed this elegant staircase to the flybridge. The dominant interior wood is koa, a now-rare Hawaiian hardwood, which he no longer specifies. The builder was Knight & Carver (San Diego, California). **Above**—The design brief for the S&S-designed 98' (30m) *Cavu* (ex-Osprey) motorsailer called for "a spaceship utilizing an extraordinary use of mirrors" to create reflected imagery. The clients also wanted a lot of plants on board, so Artese specified stainless steel planters fixed in the showers under deadlights, where they could be watered and drained overboard. Mirrors were sited to reflect images of the plants. At right, note the heelwalk concept applied to the cabin sole, and the unusual configuration of the passageway.

JOE ARTESE DESIGN

it became a facet. We still had curvilinear shapes—curved louvered doors with each louver hogged out of a solid piece of koa [now almost impossible to get]. We bought 100,000 board feet [30,480m] of koa, which grows only in Hawaii. It's the traditional tree from which native Hawaiians built their dugout canoes. I

designed koa interiors for three boats: *Signe* and two sportfishermen—the 76' [23m] *Croupier*, and the 96' [29m] *Golden Osprey* ex-Golden Odyssey II that followed."

(Some time later, Artese read an article about a native Hawaiian who searched all the islands for a koa tree large enough with which to build a



Artese's drawing of a sectional view of Signe's "gem-like" skylight, through which the mizzenmast was stepped. (See photos on page 47.) This image pre-dates—and is arguably preferable to—computer-generated virtual views, now widely in vogue, of large-yacht interiors.

traditional canoe—and found none. Thereafter, Artese refused to specify koa.)

Artese: "There are 60 skylights in Signe, including opening hatches. Dozens of flush, dioptic deadlights strategically placed all around the deck. I was able to sculpt with light. I set up the interior with cabinetry and even plants under the deadlights, which necessitated working with all the deck hardware. I wanted people to walk through that boat and not have any sense of being down below. I placed the skylights so that Bruce's majestic rig could be seen from all vantage points. The boat was designed to receive the light. Everything had to work aesthetically; you don't want to violate one of Bruce King's designs!

"In the owner's stateroom I designed a skylight though which the 80'-tall [24m] mizzenmast would rise like a tree through a forest canopy. I showed this multifaceted skylight to Bruce and I said, 'Can we do this?' He didn't say a word, just walked away with the drawing and the next thing I knew, he'd engineered it. It was wonderful working with Bruce; there was such a sense of purposefulness and uncompromising exactitude; he had the best eye in the business.

"The exposed deckbeams were laminated ash. Bruce used 3"-diameter [76mm] schedule-40 bronze tubing to transfer the loads out to the deckbeams. It was beautiful. No one had ever seen something like this before, this fall of light and shadow all about. We had to pass the mast through a ¾"-thick [9mm] slab of granite, which was a platform I'd designed to set a campaign-style chest on. There was very little clearance and only 1½" [38mm] of edge distance. Imagine the

guys with the crane...eight stories high, threading the spar down through the skylight and then through a slab of granite on its way to the keel! Coming from the production-boat world, where adding a tacky fiddle rail with exposed screws and washers was a big deal, I felt like I'd died and gone to heaven."

Launched in 1990, Signe won influential awards from the Superyacht Society and *Showboats International* magazine. That was the first year of such awards, and they changed the careers of those like Artese. "For the first time," Artese says, "industrial designers, interior designers, and stylists received recognition. And some of the naval architects freaked. Because suddenly guys like Bannenberg and Winch were celebrities making half a million a boat. More than the N.A.'s! I remember Bruce [King] quite concerned at one point: 'You guys are trying to make more money than us!'"

A Partner

Joe Artese stayed single for much of his life, and he liked it that way. But while working on *Whitefin*, he began dating his future wife, Sally Anne. She'd moved to California in the late 1970s, with her two sons and daughter by a previous marriage. Sally Anne had seen Artese's multifaceted skylights at the Laguna Beach Festival of Arts, where they'd been juried as "Skylight Sculpture." Turned out, Joe and Sally Anne attended the same church.

Artese resides in Seattle, Washington, and recently completed two major projects: the interior and exterior of the 183' (56m) Alucia, and the interior of the 92' (28m) Miss Lisa. Wife Sally Anne handles all the soft goods on his projects, as well as administrative duties.

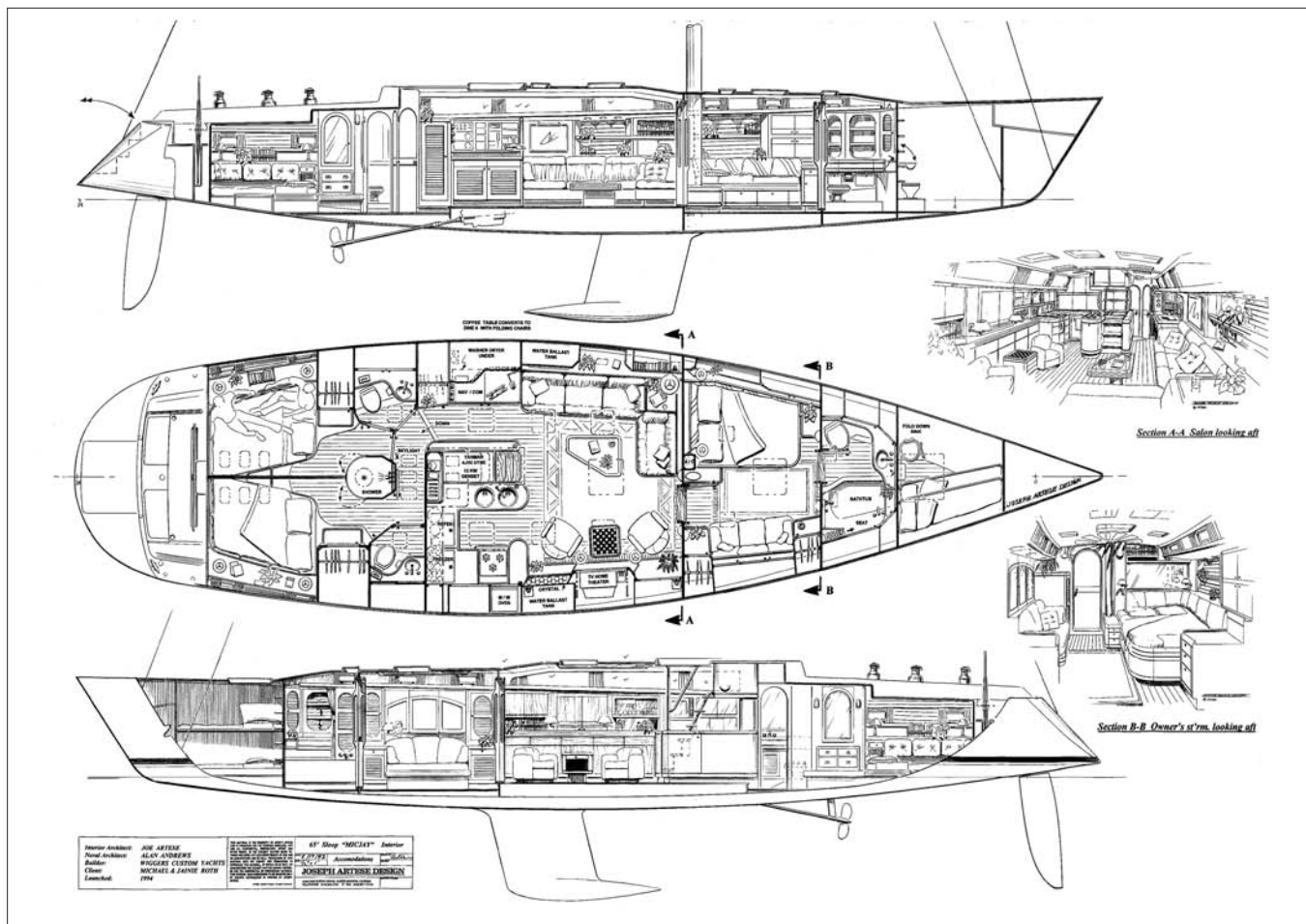
As the two began dating, a pivotal moment occurred. Here's how Artese describes it: "We were on the phone and she said, 'How's it going?' I said I was having trouble with the transition between *Whitefin*'s saloon and nav station [see drawing on page 50]. She said, 'Describe it to me.' To a non-designer? Well, I did. She asked a few more questions and then came up with the solution. She'd visualized it over the phone! Sally Anne was my first girlfriend who really understood design, the world I lived in."

Sally Anne wasn't exactly a "non-designer." Her father had been professor of architecture at the University of Notre Dame (South Bend, Indiana), and she'd studied fashion design at Parsons (New York City), and in Paris. After she and Artese were married she opened a fashion shop in Laguna Beach, and later was a manager of Nieman Marcus in Newport Beach, and Calico Corners in Marin County, doing custom design work for homes. For years Sally Anne and Joe talked about collaborating, but Artese's income was sporadic, dependent on big-boat projects, whereas Sally Anne's income was steady.

Then in 1992 Artese got a commission to design the interior of the 65' (20m) sloop *MicJay*, a racer/cruiser designed by Long Beach-based Alan Andrews. The clients were of different minds about the interior design and styling. The husband wanted a raceboat for Lake Michigan, and the wife wanted a second home on the water, decorated in an arty way. To reconcile their interests,



DAN SPURR



JOE ARTESE DESIGN

The 65' (20m) MicJay, designed in 1992 by Alan Andrews, presented an interesting challenge in that the husband wanted a race-boat, and the wife a vacation home. It was on this project that Sally Anne joined Artese in the business, helping the clients choose fabrics, colors, and lighting.

the couple flew to California to meet with Artese and Andrews. Sally Anne offered to take the wife shopping for fabric. Upon return, only two hours later, the wife told the men: "I've decorated several homes, and in all those years I have never met *anyone* who knew *exactly* what I was thinking!"

"She and Sally Anne had selected all of the fabrics for the entire project—every fabric for every pillow, trim, and curtain," says Artese. "From that moment on, I realized I had an asset here!"

And so Team Artese was born, as it were. Sally Anne handles mostly the soft goods, sourcing, and purchasing. And she's doing more of the lighting, since Artese has plenty to do handling the general arrangement, joiner-work, and the rest of the interior and/or exterior.

"We're a good team," says Sally Anne, who also manages the office.

Artese smiles. It's clear he couldn't be any happier.

Recent Projects

Two projects completed in 2009 further illustrate Artese's work: the interior and exterior of the 183' (56m) *Alucia*; and the interior of the 92' (28m) *Miss Lisa*.

- ***Alucia*** is a refit of a French-built submarine tender, reconfigured now for deep-ocean exploration. Project manager Rob McCallum describes her as "the most capable private expedition vessel ever built. Her three submersibles, complex dive-support systems, sonar capacity, advanced-technology communication systems, and helicopter support provide her with unparalleled functionality and a global reach. Conceived as a deep-sea exploration vessel, her ability to chart, visit, and explore the abyss to 3,280'

[1,000m] equips her well to make a meaningful contribution to our scientific knowledge of this planet's last frontier: the deep sea."

To support that mission there are laboratories for guest scientists, an aquarium, and film-editing suites. For his part, Artese took his cue from owner Mike McDowell's ardent interest in the underwater realm. Working with naval architect Boris Kirilloff (Green Cove Springs, Florida), Artese drew an entirely new bridge deck from the pilothouse aft; it includes the dining area and saloon, featuring floor-to-ceiling windows that wrap around the curvilinear aft end of the saloon. To create an undersea feeling, Artese specified limestone countertops that suggest the ocean floor. Interior decor is clean and crisp, thanks to maple joinerwork, brushed stainless steel accents, and a lot of stone. Artese describes the main cabin bulkhead



Left—The 183' Alucia is a refit of a French-built submarine tender. Deep Ocean Expeditions (Seattle) executed the rebuild with A. Joseph Smith as project manager.

Above left—An interesting design problem was the 60' (18.3m) straight passageway. Artese widened and articulated it, envisioning a photo gallery onto which each stateroom opens. **Above**—Alucia's main cabin is crisp and clean, rendered in maple with brushed stainless steel accents. The aqua Lumicor panels create an underwater effect.



NEIL RABINOWITZ (ALL)

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as a “backlight aqua wall,” with its series of 2’x 3’ (61cm x 91cm) electro-luminescent Lumicor panels framed in maple to create an underwater effect.

The boat’s original fore-and-aft passageway was dead straight and 60’ (18.3m) long. Artese transformed the space by widening and articulating it, creating a gallery for large photos of deep-sea marine life taken by the owners; each stateroom opens onto it.

- **Miss Lisa**, a new steel/alloy expedition yacht, was built by Citadel Yachts (formerly doing business as Aleutian Yachts) at its Tacoma, Washington, yard. She was launched last September.

Artese was introduced to the owners by their representative, Mark Masciarotte of DSG Associates (Vancouver, Washington), who called Artese one day to say, “There’s a 92’ steel boat being built at a new yard down in Tacoma, and I think the boat’s owners could use your help with a few drawings.” That was quite an understatement, inasmuch as the Artese team would spend

more than 2,000 hours on the project, extending over the next two years.

The clients were a young East Coast couple that Artese describes as affable, relaxed, and absolutely “no-nonsense.” They flew in to the Arteses’ Seattle office for a meeting with them and Masciarotte. The couple were experienced boat owners whose plan for the semi-custom vessel was to spend half their time aboard, cruising from Maine to the Caribbean without professional crew. They very much liked to cook and entertain and were attracted to Citadel’s general arrangement, huge galley, and central cooking island. They wanted a sophisticated, classic-but-low-key look, so Joe Artese’s first task, as with every client, was to establish the couple’s personal preferences for cabinetry, plus the overall mood of the interior. It happened quickly.

Artese: “At this point in a first client meeting, we usually bring out my portfolio and watch intently as the client reviews various solutions in other projects; we try to detect any emotions, likes, or dislikes that might help

us zero in on an appropriate theme. When I opened to the *first* page I was stunned when she exclaimed, ‘That’s it, that’s what we want!’

“She was pointing to a photograph of our previous project, which was an office in a home situated on a cliff overlooking Gloucester Harbor, in Massachusetts. The styling was classic Downeast, but yachty. That particular client had wanted a cross between a modern superyacht command bridge and the maritime spirit that infuses what is a historic seaport. Well, there we’d worked up Honduras-mahogany recessed paneling with simple bead surrounds, a teak-and-holly ‘sole,’ V-groove eggshell overheads with margins, and sumptuous custom crown moldings that wrap around radiused corners on all bulkheads [walls], both inside and outside corners. The desks, cabinets, and bookcases were all of a piece with custom moldings tying everything together. The footprint of the main desk or ‘command station’ overlooks the harbor, wrapping around the ‘commander.’

“So in one stroke, we had our



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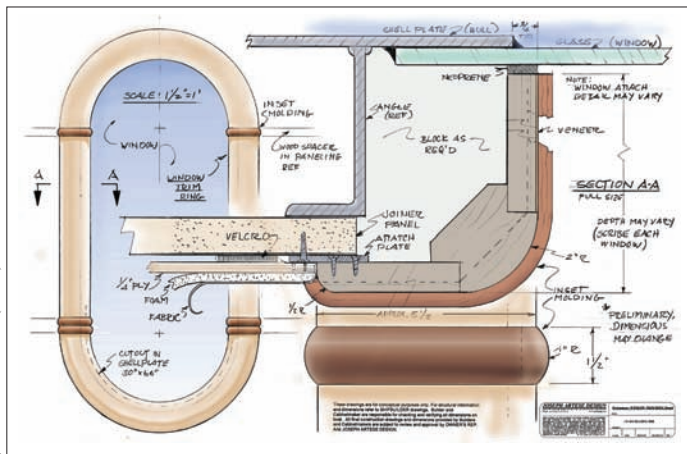
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Window trim on the 175' (53m) Peaceful Fish is a fine example of Artese's subtle detailing—a rare trait, considering the excesses of many of today's stylists. This yacht is another refit project; her art deco interior was executed by Mark Fertello's Marine Artisans Group (Seattle), which also built and installed the interior on Alucia.

theme dialed in. The only thing the owners of *Miss Lisa* wanted left out was the hand-carved rope molding, which further lashed elements of the [Gloucester] room together thematically. They thought that was a bit much. Elegance for them was in refined simplicity.”

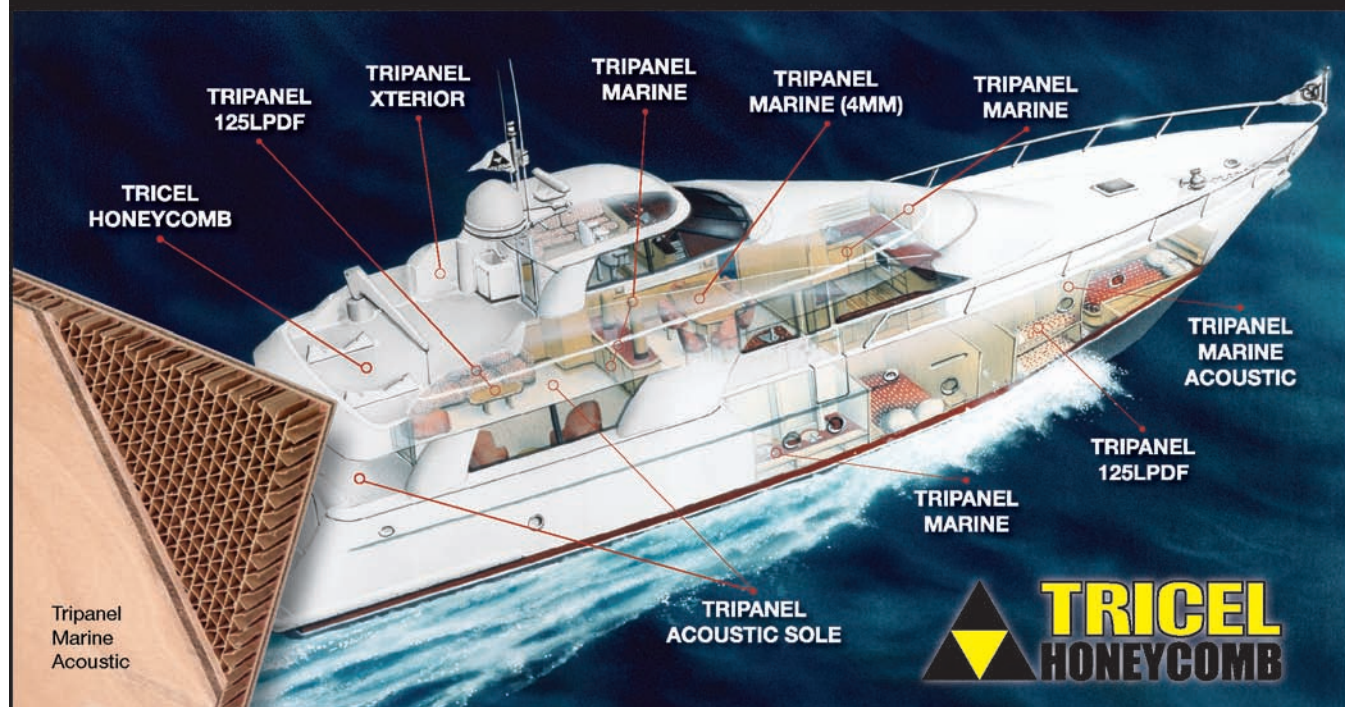
Sally Anne worked closely with the wife on all soft goods and upholstery. Over the next few weeks the two women quickly selected the fabrics, lighting, and specified the trim

details by e-mail, phone, and FedEx. Meanwhile, Joe Artese went to work on the new floor plan, elevations, and development of special features, including the design of principal custom moldings: panel motif detail, baseboard, crown and overhead beam moldings, cabin door detail and casing, locker door detail, cabinet edge or sea rail and fiddle detail and seat fascia, berth-surround detail, and the window boxes and mullions.

Artese: “Before we created the 3D

Rhino model, the preliminary details were developed by hand as the plan views and elevations of each area were drawn; this provided us with a sense of scale. We worked back and forth. For instance, in a typical elevation, say of the saloon, the placement of doors per the GA [general arrangement] is fixed, then come sofas, end tables, credenza entertainment centers; and seat cushion heights are blocked in, as are the base and crown and door casings. Once we determine the relative size

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and visual balance of these features, we begin to detail the actual shapes of the 30-or-so custom moldings, so the knives for them can be cut.

"As an expedition-style vessel, *Miss Lisa* has a very masculine appearance. On the other hand, the wife is slight and delicate, and extremely sensitive aesthetically, so we had to blend our styling of these features to satisfy each spouse in the him-and-her equation. For instance, the exterior demanded 10"-wide [25cm] 30° elliptical teak caprails to maintain proportion with the massive bow, but the interior moldings had to be robust in proportion yet delicately styled with very sensuous curvilinear forms...the types of forms that may not at first be noticed but that ultimately display their subtlety as the fall of light grazes, giving definition to the surfaces."

Artese's first perspective drawing was of the guest-deck passageway, a space he called narrow, boring, and potentially claustrophobic. For a principal feature he designed a massive wood handrail—a "tactile

sculpture"—to lead the eye through the space and wind sensually up the stairway to the main deck. To further break up the linear aspect of the passageway, and to add some character, a series of arched beams run athwartships. The bulkheads were divided into paneled sections with alabaster and polished stainless steel sconces stationed on the mullions between panels.

The clients like teak but did not want an endangered wood species or a prominent grain pattern; in the end, anegre veneer was chosen—which the yard opted to laminate over a plywood substrate—along with radiused corner stock, and where needed, to micro-lam veneers for other curvilinear details.



There have, of course, been many other projects for Artese over the years, each a story unto itself: the 175' (53m) *Peaceful Fish* art deco interior, for example, the largest dedicated scuba diving platform in the world. And, the previously mentioned 96' (29m) sportfisherman *Golden Osprey*

for a client whose representative told Artese not to sweat the details, because the owner would never sleep aboard, probably take the yacht out only once, and if he didn't like it, just give it to one of his nephews. (Artese says it turned out to be one of the client's favorite boats.)

In this business, it's sometimes difficult to keep a steady workload, because a single client can tie you up for years, making it impossible to accept other projects.

For pros like Joe Artese, the next projects surely materialize; he now commands the well-deserved appreciation that eluded him in the early days of his career. With the completion of the two major projects detailed above, he and Sally Anne are taking time to get to know their new border collie.

They bring Trace to the beach and throw him Frisbees until the dog, or Artese, is too tired to continue. (Hint: It's *never* the dog.) **PBB**

About the Author: Dan Spurr is Professional BoatBuilder's *editor-at-large*.



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