

# DEPARTURES

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# BEYOND THE SEA

Inside a 164-foot yacht built to take its owners across the world in style—art collection in tow. by CAROLINE ROUX



At the beginning, I'm a psychologist rather than an architect," says Achille Salvagni, the Roman designer, neat and chic right down to his silky socks. "You really have to understand the clients, their taste, their lifestyle. You have to, if you can, go beyond expectations."

These, of course, are familiar words from any of the world's top designers. But for one of Salvagni's latest projects—a stunning new 164-foot yacht called *Endeavour II*—they are especially resonant. The husband and wife who commissioned it have houses in the U.S. and New Zealand, a passion for Japan, and an art collection that includes works by Lucio Fontana,

The master bedroom features Achille Salvagni's multifaceted Emerald side table, as well as his Santiago sofa and a vintage Nino Zoncada armchair, both made using Dedar fabrics. The bed linens are from Frette.

Anish Kapoor, and Cy Twombly. While they had planned to spend much of the next three years aboard, following Ferdinand Magellan's route when he circumnavigated the globe, the husband's untimely death sadly changed the plans. Now the wife will sail with her family.

"*Endeavour II* had been designed as a home," Salvagni explains, "as a place to live as well as an interior in which art can be rotated. They wanted to change it depending on location, whether it's Fiji or somewhere around Africa."

Salvagni set up his business in Rome in 2000 and opened a showroom for his lighting, furniture, and accessories in London's Mayfair in 2015. (In New York, his pieces are available at the

Maison Gerard gallery.) Over the years he's gained a reputation for creating subtly luxurious residential interiors with a particular emphasis on opulent materials and bespoke methods. While contemporary, his work refers unapologetically to the traditions of fine living.

"I ask for crazy things from the craftspeople I collaborate with," he says. "And Rome is probably one of the last places you could do this. The city is home to so many churches and palaces that require conservation that there's even a big restoration school where you learn the real techniques and skills." His bronze specialist, he tells me, has become a friend. "One day, he's working on the bronzes in St. Peter's, the next he's doing my door handles!"

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Inside *Endeavour II*, there are undulating walls made of fluted, pale-gray cottonwood. (The same wood, when applied in flat panels, provides a neutral background for art.) Doors are surrounded in stippled bronze, a Salvagni trademark. Above the dining table, the lights that protrude from the ceiling have blackened-bronze shades. The table itself has a parchment top, with wooden legs treated to look like stone. “It took three attempts to get them right,” Salvagni says. Elsewhere, bedside tables are inset with red Chinese lacquer, and the door handles throughout are Japanese stone cast in bronze.

It would be easy to get lost in the details, but Salvagni’s interiors are first and foremost about atmosphere: The one required here was of complete relaxation. “With a yacht, you’re really working in three dimensions. The ceilings and walls are more important than in a normal home,” he says. “But in any project, I have to be proud of the space first. I like a nice skeleton with nice muscles. Then the decoration is like a skin. If the space itself doesn’t work, then the decor is just hiding mistakes.”

Here the corners have gentle radial curves, the colors are neutral, and there’s a subtle sense of flow throughout. Salvagni calls it an “origami effect.” In the main living room, a central ceiling panel is clad in cream Egyptian cotton, which looks elegant but also has acoustic benefits. “The owners didn’t want to hear a single noise,” Salvagni says. And the flooring throughout is tatami, held in place with inlaid bronze strips. “Tatami is soft and strong,” the designer says, “but it was really hard to source.” The oversize panels were custom-made in Osaka.

Other delicate touches that acknowledge the owners’ love of Japan are the blinds, with wenge slats and wide black-cotton tapes, and the staircases, which have limestone treads and banisters that evoke Japanese flowers. Dotted here and there are vintage ’60s lights, plus a bronze sculpture of an elephant—quirky elements that interrupt the perfection. The route apart, it’s all a long way from Magellan. ♦



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*Clockwise from top:* In the living room, Salvagni used Dedar fabrics for the custom sofa and his Vittoria side chairs; the six-bedroom *Endeavour II* at sea; the main stairwell is made from limestone and polished nickel; one of the guest cabins, with a custom light and wenge-wood chair.