

2 HAS PROTECTIVE SECURITY AFFECTED THE DESIGN OF SUPER-YACHTS?

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify if designers of super-yachts were influenced by the requirement for protective security measures. A qualitative design approach was adopted, and data was collected from interviewing a purposive sample of industry designers, protective security consultants and a client, using semi-structured interviews. Secondary data was also sourced mainly from the internet concerning specialist subjects on the topic of maritime security. The findings seem to support the proposition that protective security would influence the design in some form, whether requested by the client, regulated by the governing bodies or simply as a requirement to protect very-important-persons (VIPs). The study has implications for the industry; it calls for a greater liaison between designers and protective security consultants for the benefit of both parties. It also points to the need for undertaking further research to elicit the views of prominent shipbuilders from Germany, Holland and North America.

Introduction

During the 1970s the design and building of super-yachts was only a cottage industry. Only a few people possessed the wealth to afford an item of such indulgence and luxury. However, thirty years later the number of billionaires worldwide has, according to Forbes (2006), increased from 150 to 793. This increase in the number of extremely wealthy people has helped contribute to the large sums of money being invested in the building of super-yachts (Rushe and Armitstead, 2007). In this same Sunday Times article, Rushe and Armitstead point to the fact that demand is out-growing supply for personal ownership and chartering of super-yachts and by 2010 the number of yachts of 50 metres or more under construction is expected to have tripled.

The House of Commons' eighth report on transport, Department for Transport (2006) states: "Since 1992, there had been a total of 3,583 piratical attacks worldwide. This represents an increase of 168% between 1992 and 2005. In the same period 340 crew members and/or passengers died at the hands of pirates, and 464 received injuries."

Due to the very nature of protective security, where anonymity is one of its greatest strengths, it is unlikely that information regarding the protection of these vessels will be released or published in the public domain. Despite the attention that some of these owners enjoy, anything regarding their own personal security would be difficult to obtain without inside information. Only those actually involved within the industry would be party to this information. However, designers, shipbuilders and protective security consultants would be reluctant to



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release this information as they would want to protect their own livelihoods, methods and techniques, and because they would be under contracts drawn up by the clients or governments concerning issues of disclosure.

Hence there is very little literature published on the subject. If there is, it will be either in the form of unwelcome news (a leak in security) or information deliberately fed to the press that will be designed to mislead members of the public or potential threats from would be aggressors, as demonstrated recently in one national newspaper where the wrong yacht was showcased (Daily Telegraph, January 15th 2007).

Some methods of security will be of common knowledge (safe havens, escape routes, closed-circuit-television, tracking devices and bullet proof glass); however, the methods in which they are employed will be jealously guarded. The designers will also guard their innovations and own techniques of protective security that they apply in the vessels' design (the prevention of intruders boarding from smaller craft, usually from the rear), as this will give them an edge over their competitors when submitting their product to the client for consideration.

Currently the only literature available to aid the designer in design considerations are: the seafaring regulations set by the Safety of Life at Sea Conventions - SOLAS (1914), the International Maritime Organization - IMO (1960), and the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code - ISPS (2004) which forms part of SOLAS. The only other source is the insurance companies, such as Lloyds and Registro Italiano Navale - RINA (1861), who have devised their own rules in conjunction with the SOLAS regulations specifying the standards that the construction of these vessels must meet to be insured before they can be put to sea. For these regulations to be implemented the shipyard builders will take all the liability to ensure that the ship functions correctly as a sea-going vessel to suit Lloyds and RINA specifications. The protective security experts also have a requirement to be aware of these regulations due to their position as mediators between all the parties involved in the build, and to the law and legislation in governing the carriage of firearms on board for self defence when transiting around the world's more dangerous seas. Protective security issues are also usually reliant on protective security consultants being brought in to aid the designer in producing a product that the consultants have identified to be of benefit to the client's security and liking.



Study Method

The study was of a qualitative nature and the main method employed to collect data was to interview those directly involved in the industry: designers, protective security consultants and a client, using semi-structured interviews. The information collated was then analysed to ascertain if protective security has affected the design

of super-yachts. Secondary data was also sourced mainly from the Internet concerning the topic of Maritime Security.

The main findings of the report, albeit small scale-due to timeconstraints, was thus based on experts' accounts stemming from their industry knowledge, experience and expertise. These experts were drawn from the design area (two designers), the Protective Security area (three security experts) and a client who owns a super-yacht. By interviewing these subject experts, who are at the forefront of knowledge in their industry, current and factual information would be gained to help set benchmarks for others in the industry to follow. A short list of questions was used and the interviews were conducted in a relaxed manner allowing the subject expert interviewees to freely talk around the subject without the interviewer interrupting and influencing their answers. It is the direct answers given by these experts that were collated and formed the data for the main findings of this paper.

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Protective Security and Super-Yacht Design

The super-yacht owners are extremely wealthy individuals. These people, who are the Protective Security Industry clients, and their material possessions, present a target for unwanted boarding, thieving, piracy and terrorism that make the prevention and combating of these threats necessary. For some clients however, the main perceived threat is the intrusion on their privacy from the media who prove to be both persistent and encroaching.

The evidence from this study suggests that since the increase in piracy and the threat of terrorism, protective security had become necessary and protective security experts more influential in the past fifteen years.

All the Protective Security experts interviewed indicated that they had previously, or were currently being employed to advise designers in incorporating security measures and features into the designs of super-yachts. This was to safeguard primarily the client; and secondly their possessions, including the yacht; and protect its working crew.

Common reoccurring themes of the preventative measures stated by the interviewees were the following:

- CCTV
- Lighting – used in port to deter persons from approaching the vessel and to prevent media cameras from catching unwanted footage of the client.
- Infra red light systems – for viewing at night into areas of darkness.
- Safe havens – for the client, crew, and areas of strategic importance (the bridge, engine rooms) used in the event of unwanted boarders.
- Security control point – a room sometimes placed near boarding points when in port that will control all visitors' access and CCTV in and around the ship.



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- Access routes to and from the VIP quarters – these will be separate from the main crew routes and could link directly into the escape plan.
- Global tracking devices that are installed giving an up to date location of the vessel for the authorities to monitor.
- Other means of transport used as a means of evacuating the VIP – e.g. Helicopters, high-speed tender craft and submarines; these all require housing features to be considered during the design process.
- Screening areas using two way glass preventing intrusion by the media, but allowing the owner to remain outdoors with their privacy intact.
- Sunken seating areas outside that also remain out of sight to the media.
- Bullet proof glass – in and around the VIP quarters.
- Personal lifeboats - located in close proximity of the VIP quarters.

It was also established from the interviews that the main factors influencing design consisted of four groupings:

- The client – in regards to their requests and the product that they wish to purchase.
- The designer – in terms of producing a product of style that is appealing to the client and both practicable and feasible.
- The protective security consultant – in advising and requesting protective security measures appropriate to the perceived threat that are legal (e.g. carriage of firearms), where is the vessels geographical base likely to be?
- The shipyard builders and engineers – are the requests feasible, can all the parties' wishes and requests be incorporated into the build through modern technology, and do they meet the requirements of the governing bodies, e.g. SOLAS?

However, all the above will be affected by one overriding influence; money and the overall cost and budget required in the building and maintenance of the vessel.

Conclusion

From the viewpoint of the designers, the design and implementation of security measures was client driven. If the clients or their advisors felt the need or requirement to include such preventative measures then it would be included (e.g. bullet proof glass, private escape routes from the VIP quarters or even the positioning of lifeboats). The designers were also of the opinion that continuous evolution of super-yacht design, through the use of cutting edge technologies, allows them to incorporate new products, features and innovative ideas, such as features usually only applied to vessels in use with military navies.

The findings suggest that, depending on the clients' status, security issues would influence the design to some degree. The findings also suggest the extent to which security influences design is dependent on the clients'/state's own interpretation of the threat posed to them, the concern for the protection of their personal possessions and wealth, the geographical location/base of the vessel, and the advice they receive from hired protective security personnel. However, money was viewed as the overriding factor in the wish list of the client, designers, protective security consultants and shipyard builders that ultimately, would influence the design process.

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