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PANORAMA

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# A LEGEND REBORN

STORY KIM KAVIN

WITH THIS EXTENSIVE REBUILD OF *ATLANTIDE*,  
ROYAL HUISMAN'S HUISFIT DEMONSTRATES  
HOW TO UPDATE AND REIMAGINE A CLASSIC  
YACHT IN SHOWSTOPPING STYLE.

TOM VAN OOSSEN

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ew yachts have histories as storied, or as worth preserving, as *Atlantide*. The 122-foot (37-meter) motorsailer first splashed in 1930, built as *Caleta* by Phillip and Sons of Dartmouth, U.K. Her original owner was Sir William Burton, who used her as a tender for

his yachts until she was conscripted into service for Operation Dynamo, helping to evacuate the Allied forces from Dunkirk.

That, alone, would make her notable in today's global fleet, but she took on yet another new life after the war. A few of them, actually. There was a two-year rebuild at Thornycroft in Southampton, England, by a Greek shipping magnate who relaunched her as *Ariane* in 1948. The yacht then became a fixture of the Mediterranean cruising scene for decades before being named *Atlantide* in the 1980s. Venture capitalist Tom Perkins owned her starting in 1998, and he, too, commissioned a rebuild to make her what he wanted her to be.

*Atlantide's* current owner, Netscape founder Jim Clark, acquired her in 2020 as a companion to the 138-foot (42-meter) J Class *Hanuman* that he built at Royal Huisman in the Netherlands in 2009. *Hanuman* was the third statement yacht Clark had commissioned from the Dutch yard, following the 156-foot (47-meter) sloop *Hyperion* in 1998 and the 295-foot (90-meter) schooner *Athena* in 2004.

Suffice it to say, Clark likes the work that Royal Huisman's Huisfit does, which is why, when *Hanuman* was there for

THE REFIT OF *ATLANTIDE* BEGAN IN JANUARY 2021. THE WORK REQUIRED WAS SO EXTENSIVE THAT THE PROJECT BECAME A REBUILD.

ROYAL HUISMAN'S HUISFIT TEAM COMPLETED THE LAST TASK IN NOVEMBER 2023.



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updates in October 2020, he asked if *Atlantide* could be refitted the following year.

“The next thing we knew, he’d decided to ship *Atlantide* to the Netherlands immediately instead of waiting,” says a spokesman for the shipyard, whose Huisfit team undertook what became a full rebuild from January 2021 to November 2023.

As the photographs in these pages show, *Atlantide* once again has a new life to live—and quite a beautiful one, at that.

This time around, some 40 percent of *Atlantide*’s hull, deck and frames were replaced. Her interior was fully reimagined, too—made far more classic than Perkins’ preferred Art Deco styling, now with an emphasis on French walnut. That work was done with help from deVosdeVries design, whose principals had worked with one of Clark’s favorite designers, Pieter Beeldsnijder, prior to Beeldsnijder’s death in 2016. According to Royal Huisman’s team, every onboard system was also overhauled or replaced, save the original Gardner diesels.

The nearly century-old yacht left the Huisfit facility without a nick or a scratch on her, which is really quite something, given everything the craftsmen found that required fixing or replacing during the time she was there.

Beginning from the moment the craftsmen got *Atlantide* out of the water, they noticed something that led to



French walnut is used extensively throughout the rebuilt *Atlantide*. Royal Huisman’s team collaborated with Acanthus International in Palm Beach, Florida, to achieve the finish, which involved a 14-step process.





MIKE TESSELAAR

something else, and still something more. For instance, what seemed at first to be a crack in the hull turned out to be filler material that was flaking away, along with a dented and deformed structure. Removing the main-deck windows prior to sanding the superstructure revealed that they were glued, not properly mounted into frames. Deck leaks had caused wet interior bulkheads and built-ins. And then some.

It took six full months for Huisfit's team to scan and redesign the classic yacht with modern 3D technology. They found almost no space behind the walls or above the overhangs for new equipment, systems and lights, so they had to think creatively. In-house pipefitters custom-made pieces of insulation to fit in locations where almost no insulation had existed throughout the hull and superstructure. To strengthen and refinish the teak deckhouse, they simply lifted it clear off the yacht in a single piece, so they could work on it in a dust-free environment.

Achieving the antiqued finish that Clark wanted for *Atlantide's* interior required help from the art and architectural renovation team at Acanthus International in Palm Beach, Florida. They used a 200-year-old process that includes applying a 14-step finish of bleaching, coloring, French polishing and distressing—all



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Royal Huisman's team considered every inch of *Atlantide*, from the finish surrounding the stairwell to the rope detail in wall accents.



TOM VAN OOSANEN



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Looking at her decks, joinery, lighting and other features today, it's hard to believe *Atlantide* is nearly 100 years old.



OWNER JIM  
CLARK SAYS  
THAT EVERY  
PART OF  
*ATLANTIDE*  
IS NOW WELL  
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HE SEES HER  
AS A WORK  
OF ART.

*Atlantide* is seen on her own here, but she's often used  
as a tender for Clark's yacht *Hanuman* on the racing  
and regatta circuit.

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**Right and below:** The wheelhouse is the only area of the yacht with a teak interior matching the varnished teak brightwork outside. With every original overhead removed, redoing the lighting plan was an easy decision. DeVosDeVries design brought in the same type of ambient lighting the owners have on *Hanuman*.



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of it done by hand. And none of that work could even begin on the paneling and cabinetry until it was built offsite and then fitted on board. “The result,” according to the shipyard, “not only rivals collector-quality period furniture, but is perfectly in keeping with the yacht’s ethos.”

Crew spaces also were modernized, including the galley, which now has white cabinetry, new appliances and professional surfaces for cooking and plating five-star

meals. Guests will be able to sample that fare in a dining space that was moved to the aft deck under a fixed Bimini top with removable weather curtains. The table here is custom-built, with a diamond design and a glasslike finish.

The wheelhouse has a teak interior that matches *Atlantide*’s exterior brightwork. According to the shipyard, 95 percent of the exterior bronze fittings remain original and are now “beautifully restored.” What’s fully new is the lighting, which



deVosdeVries executed in ambient style, similar to what Clark likes aboard *Hanuman*.

In part, the yard helped to ensure that every detail would be suitable for Clark's tastes by working with *Hanuman's* captain, Josh Luckhurst, as project manager for the *Atlantide* rebuild. Clark wanted the choices to last, making quality of construction just as big a priority as style and design.

"The previous owners did not keep a full-time crew on the boat, as they tended to use it only in summer, and it suffered a bit for that," Clark said. "And it appears that some early work may have been more about cosmetics or meeting a deadline than longevity of the vessel. Everything that Royal Huisman replaced was done with the highest quality."

There's more—so much more—that could be written about this rebuild, including a modification to the original rudder, an upgrade to the stabilizers, installation of a new split exhaust system, and creation of a custom electrical switchboard that would fit in the engine room. One of the more telling additions was the brand-new rig and sails, all built to the original plan, and all of which is now on display for fans of classic yachts as *Atlantide* is used as a tender to *Hanuman* on the racing scene.

"It's a work of art," Clark says of *Atlantide* as she prepares to begin her next century on the world's waters. "There were parts of the yacht that were not well thought out before. Now, it is." ♦



Outdoor dining is now beneath a fixed Bimini top on the aft deck, giving guests broad views all around while keeping them sheltered from hot sun or light rain.

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