



BIG FISH RECENTLY WIGGLED FREE OF HER SMALL POND IN AUCKLAND'S VIADUCT HARBOUR TO MAKE FOR THE OPEN OCEAN ON A WORLDWIDE CRUISING TOUR. JOHN JULIAN STEPPED ABOARD BEFORE SHE LEFT TO GET THE STORY.

BIG FISH



GONE FISHING
 Clockwise from left:
 The view aft along the
 port side, complete
 with granite decking;
 Spa and the shaded
 seating area on the
 flybridge; Looking
 aft from the Pod or
 Crow's Nest.



**“I THOUGHT IT WAS MY DESTINY.
 A BIG FISH IN A BIG POND –
 THAT’S WHAT I WANTED. THAT’S
 WHAT I WANTED FROM DAY ONE.”**
 FROM *BIG FISH* BY DANIEL WALLACE

Auckland’s Viaduct Harbour is a good place for a stroll at almost any time of year if you like looking at large yachts. You may encounter anything from a hundred-year-old schooner to the very latest sloop, ketch or motor yacht from the leading local yards. There may be yachts from Europe or the United States, come to cruise New Zealand waters or take advantage of the refit facilities. Fishing boats, too, tie up here, making the harbour (which is quite a small pond compared to others) an even busier place during the summer months.

One vessel stood out particularly during this last Southern Hemisphere winter, for she had a sense of purpose that separated her from the other yachts. Your eye might have been drawn to the high hurricane bow or the stepped sheer behind the bold, rectangular windows of the accommodation. A closer look would have revealed that the bulwarks surrounding her after quarters were designed to be folded outward and lowered onto the water to form a ‘beach’, the surface of which was not teak, as you might expect, but *granite*. Set into her hull you note bays for smaller craft like those found on naval ships, and alongside a large tender; 8.5 metres long, 4.5 tonnes and equipped to carry divers. This, you might have thought, is no ordinary yacht.

And you’d have been right. Because this was *Big Fish*, a 45-metre luxury expedition yacht built for Aquos Yachts by McMullen & Wing in Auckland and designed, by British Columbian Gregory C. Marshall, for life in a much bigger pond than Viaduct Harbour.

Looking aloft today, you’ll see in the vertical surfaces an abundance of glass, allowing those on board to fully enjoy their surroundings. The accommodation is topped with a seating area, known as the pod or crow’s nest, which can accommodate six people 15 metres above the waterline; a fabulous view, even in the harbour. But while this vessel may look good in the company of other big yachts in port, she is clearly designed to venture further afield, from the warm islands of the Pacific and the Caribbean to the cold extremes of Arctic and Antarctic latitudes.

The man charged with taking her there is Captain Winston Joyce-Clarke, a vastly experienced master whose interests include technical diving, game fishing, sailing, windsurfing and paddle-boarding. The big lazaret accessed via the central hatchway on the hull deck is known as the sports room, and is fully equipped as a gym and for use as a dive shop. There is a day head and a service centre for guests using the beaches and the after deck, so cool drinks and a fresh water shower are at hand after diving, sailing or simply sunbathing. Moving forward into the engine room, passing the engineer’s cabin to port and the control room to starboard, you’ll encounter the twin Caterpillar 3508B DI-TA main engines and the pair of Kilopak 125 kilowatt generators, which give *Big Fish* her enviable fuel economy; she boasts a cruising range of 9,200 nautical miles at 8 knots, or 5,000 nautical miles at 15 knots (which is close to her maximum speed of 16 knots).

Moving aft again, then up onto the main deck, you enter the saloon by way of the central, sliding doors aft. Here, the tall windows to either side taper toward the stern, offering guests a wonderful view across the broad side decks to whatever lies beyond, be it city or cay, atoll or iceberg, from the settees and easy chairs within.

Light is in plentiful supply aboard *Big Fish*; there are 200 square metres of it flooding into the boat through 8.5 tonnes of glass in no less than 159 sections.

Further forward is the dining area, which has a calm and welcoming air reflecting the owner's preference for relaxed entertaining.

Forward again is possibly the yacht's most striking interior feature, the video hall. This space is a three-storey atrium, lit from above by a skylight set and the multi-coloured, illuminated treads of the retractable staircase. Taking pride of place is a 7.6-metre high vertical wall of flat-screen TVs, which can relay different displays on the three levels or the same throughout. The screens are able to playback bridge camera footage, feature films or movies made by guests while diving or enjoying an expedition ashore.

"The owner wanted dynamic art and that's what we've given him," says Steve Segall, president of AV Concepts and Design and the man responsible for this most impressive installation. "It's a clean palette with pictures or just random colours, not a piece of static art that's the same all the time."



The elevation of the atrium, the sense of spaciousness in the main deck accommodation, the uncluttered arrangement of the furniture, and the unconstrained exterior access aft and to either side all add to the informal yet very comfortable atmosphere. While the book-matched oak paneling is as beautifully crafted as you would expect on a vessel of this pedigree, its honeyed hues are understated, as are all the fabrics and fittings aboard *Big Fish*.

Owner and family, guests and charterers will enjoy some spectacular scenery from this vessel without being distracted by fussy interior fixtures or a surfeit of heavy upholstery and forbidding dark wood.

Passing through the atrium takes you through to the galley, which is equipped with the latest in Miele and Hoshizaki kitchen equipment and features large windows on each side and a small table to port, where the owner may enjoy his breakfast while talking with the chef. The book-matched oak surfaces extend through the galley and into the crew accommodation and the guest quarters, providing a pleasingly consistent style to the interior.

There are four guest staterooms, each with an adjacent bathroom; two forward of the atrium on the hull deck and two aft. Sliding doors divide each pair, so the accommodation is extremely versatile and can suit either large family groups or several couples sharing a charter.

All the cabins benefit from generously proportioned windows (a hallmark of Gregory C. Marshall designs) and from abundant headroom enhanced by the concave overheads. The crew mess and further cabins for six are further forward on this level, below the tender garage on the main deck with its rising roof and integral crane jib. The amount of extra volume in the garage is most unusual even on a 45-metre vessel, and has any number of uses:



LIGHT IS IN PLENTIFUL SUPPLY ABOARD *BIG FISH*; THERE ARE 200 SQUARE METRES OF IT FLOODING INTO THE BOAT THROUGH 8.5 TONNES OF GLASS.

LUXURY AT LARGE

Clockwise from lower left: Video hall and atrium with three-storey staircase; The salon on the main deck, looking forward to the video hall; The panoramic view from the owner's stateroom on the bridge deck.



“It can be a film studio, kids’ playroom or whatever you want to make of it,” says Joyce-Clarke. “A lot of boats have their owner’s quarters here in the forward shoulder of the vessel below the pilothouse, which is a strange use of productive space. How many hours does an owner sleep there?”

The owner needn’t worry though, as he will still get a comfortable night aboard *Big Fish*. Aft of the atrium on the bridge deck is a fabulous suite, which includes a double bedroom with panoramic 270-degree views, a bathroom with tub and shower and a study / dining area. Given *Big Fish*’s schedule and the places she will visit, it is hard to imagine a more perfect position from which to watch some of the least explored wonders of the world.

Unless, of course, you happen to be on the bridge. The Captain enjoys a somewhat ship-like view from the helm as the bow, which usually contains the tender, is higher than on a comparable yacht. He oversees a glass cockpit with a series of screens forward of the helm station, more instruments in an upper console and a comfortable, L-shaped seating area and table behind.

“We wanted to give the captain as much information as possible with the screens,” says Don Ehrlich of Yachtronics, responsible for much of the navigation and communications equipment. “We can bring up to 16 feeds into the monitors, including camera mode so we can see what’s happening around the boat, then radar, plotter, alarm system and so on.”

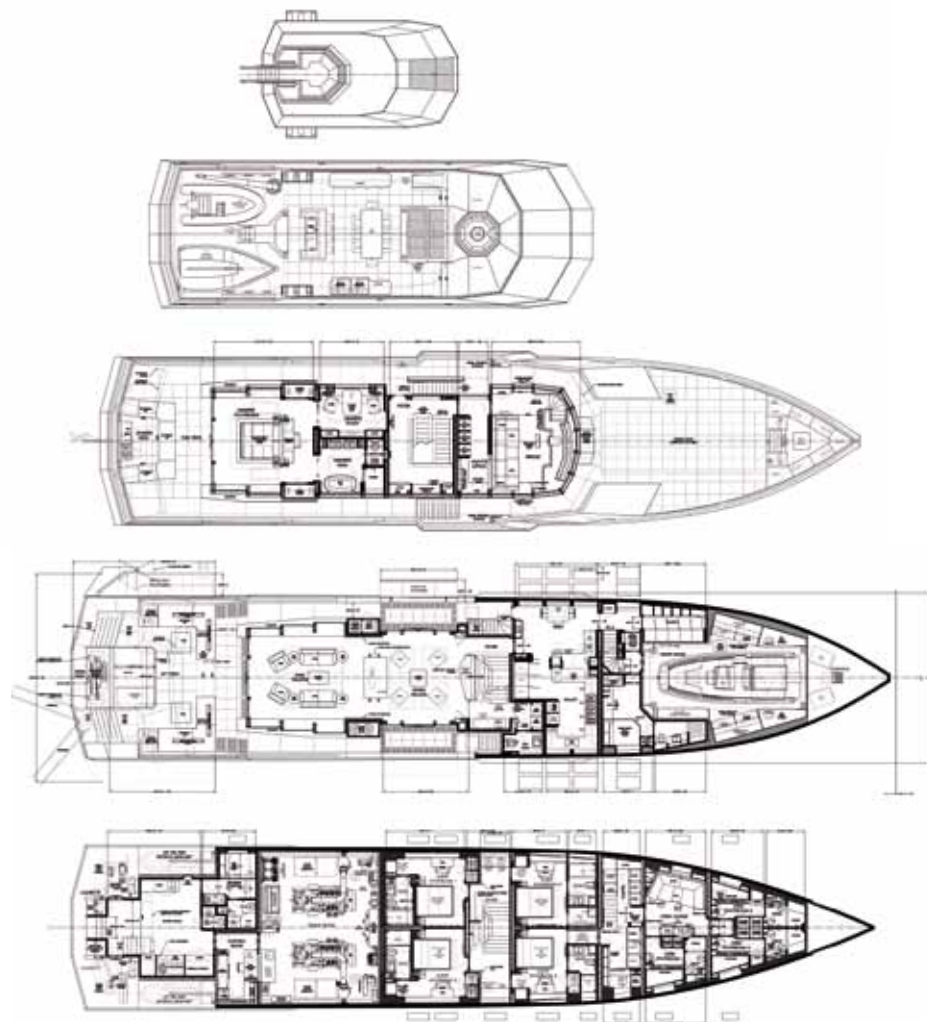
The exterior evidence of all this, in terms of domes and aials, is surprisingly compact. Most of these systems are carried on a trim, raked mast above the pod, which will soon be one of the most sought-after spectator platforms anywhere at sea.

You can charter *Big Fish* through 37 South Ltd in Auckland. The agent responsible, Allan Jouning, is not only a founding director of the business but a pioneer expedition yacht captain himself, having in 1994 taken the converted Smit tug *Itasca* through the Northwest Passage in the first single-season traverse recorded by a private yacht. He later visited Antarctica with the vessel and set the scene for expedition yacht charter with a very successful round-the-world tour, before *Itasca* was sold to Italy at the end of that decade.

Big Fish left Auckland in late June 2010 with a suitably impressive itinerary ahead of her. At the time of writing, in early September, she is in the middle of her second Pacific charter. From Tahiti, *Big Fish* will make for the Antarctic via Panama and the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show before heading back towards the Caribbean via the Amazon. From there, she will shape a course for Northern Europe before embarking upon the first transit of the Northeast Passage across the top of Russia by a luxury yacht. Expectations are great, not least from Jouning himself:

“Because of my past experience I’m really excited about this boat and the type of voyage it’s doing,” he said. “I’m delighted that people are going to be able to experience these remote destinations for the first time in such luxury.”

www.aquosyachts.com
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www.mcmullenandwing.com



BUILDER	McMullen & Wing
COUNTRY OF BUILD	New Zealand
DESIGNER	Gregory C. Marshall
NAVAL ARCHITECT	Gregory C. Marshall
INTERIOR DESIGNER	Gregory C. Marshall
PROJECT MANAGER	David F. Darwent
YEAR OF BUILD	2009 / 10
LOA	45.00m / 147'7"
LWL	42.90m / 140'9"
BEAM	9.00m / 29'6"
DRAFT	2.56m / 8'5"
DISPLACEMENT	470 tonnes
HULL	Steel
SUPERSTRUCTURE	Aluminium
ENGINE	2 X Caterpillar 3508B DI-TA
PROPELLERS	5 blade nickel-aluminium-bronze, 1,650 mm/5'5" diameter
SPEED (MAX)	16 knots
SPEED (CRUISE)	10 knots
RANGE	7,700 miles @ 10 knots
FRESHWATER CAPACITY	11,400 litres
BLACKWATER CAPACITY	Grey and Black 6,800 litres
GREYWATER CAPACITY	See above
BOW THRUSTERS	TRAC 150 hp
GENERATORS (MAIN)	2 X Kilopak 125 kw
NAVIGATION ELECTRONICS	2 X Furuno Radars, Transat & Nobeltec Charting, Plath Gyro Compass and Autopilot, 2 X North Star GPS
BERTHS (OWNER & GUEST)	10 in 5 Double Staterooms
CREW	10
PAINT	Alexseal
CLASSIFICATION	Germanischer Lloyd Maltese Cross 100A5 Motor Yacht
TENDERS	300hp 8.50m/ 28'00" McMullen & Wing Custom Tender designed by Gregory C. Marshall; 110hp 4.25m / 14'00" Nautica RIB; Vanguard Nomad sailboat; six kayaks