



THE CASINO ROYALE

The Admiral of Interiors

By Christina Bohnstengel Photography by Stephen Cridland

CAROL WILLIAMSON IS THE DESIGNER OF CHOICE FOR SUPERYACHT SHIPYARDS.

It is every designer's supreme dream—to work with an open budget, playing with the world's rarest materials and layering with the finest fabrics for high-end projects in the elite world of luxury brands. Carol Williamson has crafted such a career for herself after nearly four decades in the world of design. And while many professionals choose their niche and stick to a strict profile, Williamson has made a point of breaking tradition by creating interior spaces for an array of mediums. She has designed for a number of corporate venues (Nike World Campus) and art institutions (Abraham Lincoln Museum) as well as high-end residential properties.

Her most recent project to garner headlines was onboard a superyacht from our favorite secret agent. The Casino Royale, dubbed the queen of many of this season's boat shows, is 163 feet and the largest ship to date from Christensen Shipyard. The luxury charter yacht was not built for speed, but for a relaxing sojourn on the sea, cruising at 10 knots with a top speed of 17 knots.

After seven years of designing the luxury interiors of various superyachts, Williamson was a natural pick as designer extraordinaire for the project. She had worked with Christensen in the past on several other ships and met owners John and Jeannette Staluppi (of Millennium Yachts fame) through their mutual relationship with the Washington-based shipyard.

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MASTER STATEROOM



MAIN SALOON

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The partnership between client and designer was an easy fit from start to finish. Williamson explains that on this particular ship, which included 6,900 square feet of interior space, the owners were very involved. "They were extremely integral to all aspects of the design and really enjoyed doing it," she says, crediting the entire Bond theme seen throughout the ship to their creative genius. At the aft of the saloon, the roulette wheel, made by master-craftsman John Homchick, sets the tone of the Casino Royale. "The owners requested the roulette rather than the traditional compass rose," says Williamson. "It works wonderfully because it is really dramatic when you first approach," she says. The effect of the black stone wheel, which is inset with laser-cut, polished stainless steel, is one of her favorite highlights. Also on her showcase list is the collection of Erte artwork that the owners brought onboard. Each piece uses playing card imagery, emphasizing the Bond theme. The flybridge plays host to two stone tabletops, inlaid with an Ace and Jack of spades. Topping off the 007 concentration is the sweeping central staircase, which is fitted with frosted-glass panels, deftly etched with iconic Bond-girl silhouettes. Sapele mahogany, onyx, custom marble, granite, and Italian glass sconces dominate the interiors of the luxury yacht.

Williamson's credentials for such a project began at the University of Oregon. She started her studies in pure architecture, but soon recognized her passion for interiors. "I realized that I loved the detail and the more intimate relationship with the client," she says. She went on to graduate with a Bachelor of Interior Architecture degree, and, in 1984, started her own design firm, Carol Williamson + Associates Limited.

"It has been a very rich existence as a designer," Williamson says. "I never get bored or stagnant. I'm not known for one type of design or style, and I think that is what keeps it very fresh. Every project teaches me some new aspect of design that I carry with me to the next."

ARTWORK BY ERTE
ADORN THE INTERIOR SPACE
OF THE CASINO ROYALE

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In 2008, that next project was the 160-foot Primadonna, also from Christensen. She cites the yacht's skylounge as one of her favorites because of the palettes and the contrast of the dark java-stained, high-gloss furniture, which strikes dramatically against the texture of the chenille that she chose. John Homchick collaborated on this project as well and found a Labradorite stone with brilliant flashes of cobalt blue and teal green. "It looks like the bar is underlit but it's actually the natural flashes of the iridescent flecks in the stone," she explains. "We developed the entire palette of the skylounge off of those colors that came out of the Labradorite."

Williamson describes other design aspects of the yacht. "We went from the very textural chenilles in the saloon to beautiful striped silks on the pillows. And then we did all of the custom furniture in high gloss. We used lots of crystal to reflect light, and the owner loves mother-of-pearl so those accents are also prevalent throughout the yacht."

Next on the drawing boards for the designer is a 193-foot superyacht that she is working on for a client with Trinity Yachts. "I feel very fortunate. These yachts are like beautiful jewel boxes. I'm so blessed to get to play with the level of materials that I do. From the architectural materials, like the wood and the stone, to the beautiful fine fabrics, to getting to work on custom furniture designs and witness those come to fruition—it's all so enriching and rewarding."

SKYLOUNGE OF THE PRIMADONNA

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CRYSTAL ACCENTS ARE PRESENT THROUGHOUT PRIMADONNA

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