

Classical civilisation

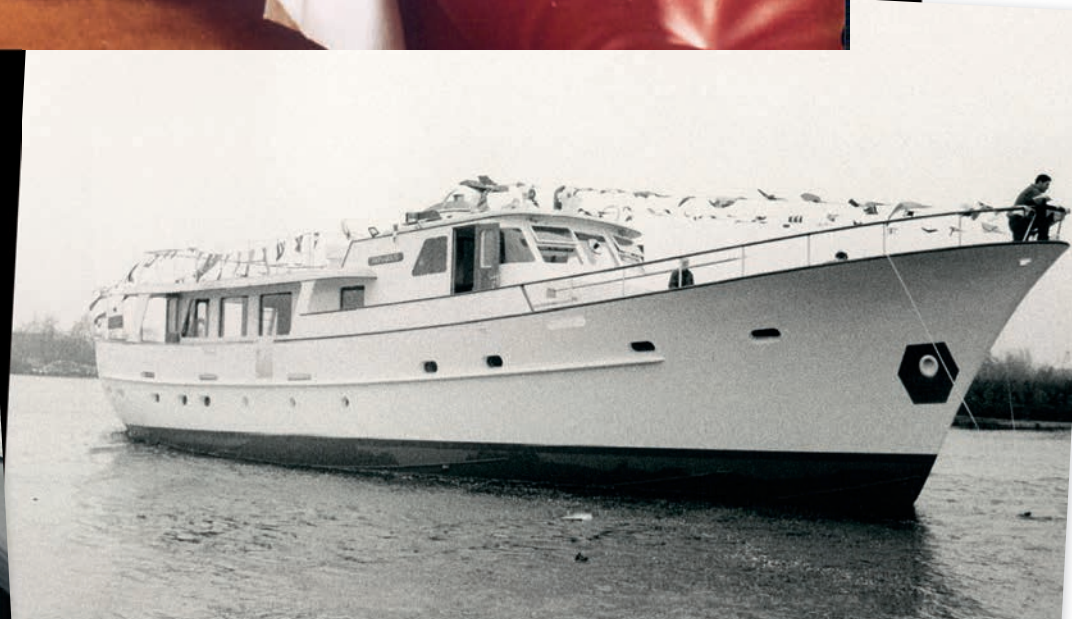
When Roeland Pels fell in love with a decrepit classic Feadship, he embarked upon a detailed and imaginative rebuild. *Sam Fortescue* learns what it took to balance heritage with modern lifestyle

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so the saying goes. When lifelong sailor Roeland Pels stood on the dock in Barcelona staring at a decrepit, 50-year-old Feadship, he saw past the rust and the dismal interior. He saw idyllic summer afternoons alone in Balearic anchorages, drinks with a view on the sundeck and a home away from home. "We knew we would have a museum piece that would keep itself for a long time," he says. It was a meeting that was to consume four long years, but produce a modern classic that is perhaps more comfortable than she has ever been during her 50-year life.

"She was in a desperate state," says Pels of the boat then called *Olympia*, "a semi-wreck. I found a crew willing to take her to the Netherlands in 2012. We made an X-ray survey in the port and welded some steel on the weak spots. Then we installed extra pumps in case something went wrong on the way, which luckily it didn't."

POST-REFIT PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF CHARTERS & DREAMS

All vintage pictures are taken from a 1960s Feadship brochure





The classic Feadship has been enjoyed by several proud owners over the past 50 years. Below: there is now a horseshoe of comfortable seating around the canoe stern, adjacent to a dining table that seats five

Now returned to her original name, *Monara* was once the pride and joy of a wealthy Milanese banking family, then an English lord, and had welcomed Spanish royalty aboard in her time. Now with rust streaking her trademark clipper bow and canoe stern, she was sailed to Aalsmeer near Amsterdam to be comprehensively gutted where she lay alongside. Then, with just the essential systems left in place, she went on her own bottom to Feadship at Makkum, where she was at last lifted out and brought undercover for a refit that was to last more than two years.

"This was more or less a rebuild rather than a refit," says Feadship's head of refit sales, Ico Vergouwe. "It would have been quite ambitious if we had not gained experience with a number of other serious refits, including [*Monara's* sistership] *Sultana*."

Pels takes up the story again. "There was a lot of rust, so the boat was totally sand-blasted and all the fairing putty removed. It took 40 tonnes of sand, but it was necessary." There was also heavy galvanic corrosion where aluminium window frames and fittings had been set into the steel of the hull and superstructure, and all these had to be replaced with stainless steel. Feadship also added a bulbous bow to make her more efficient



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under power and add buoyancy forward for greater comfort in a seaway. Then they cut a big hole in her side. It was time to get the engines out.

These twin diesels were originally built by Gardner of Manchester, who supplied many of the 1960s Feadships. The company no longer exists, but its service and maintenance arm has endured in north Kent in the UK, and has serviced *Monara's* eight-cylinder 8L3B units throughout their life. Each weighs three and a half tonnes and develops a modest 230hp at maximum rpm, but consumes a very parsimonious 20 to 25 litres per hour at her eight-knot cruising speed.

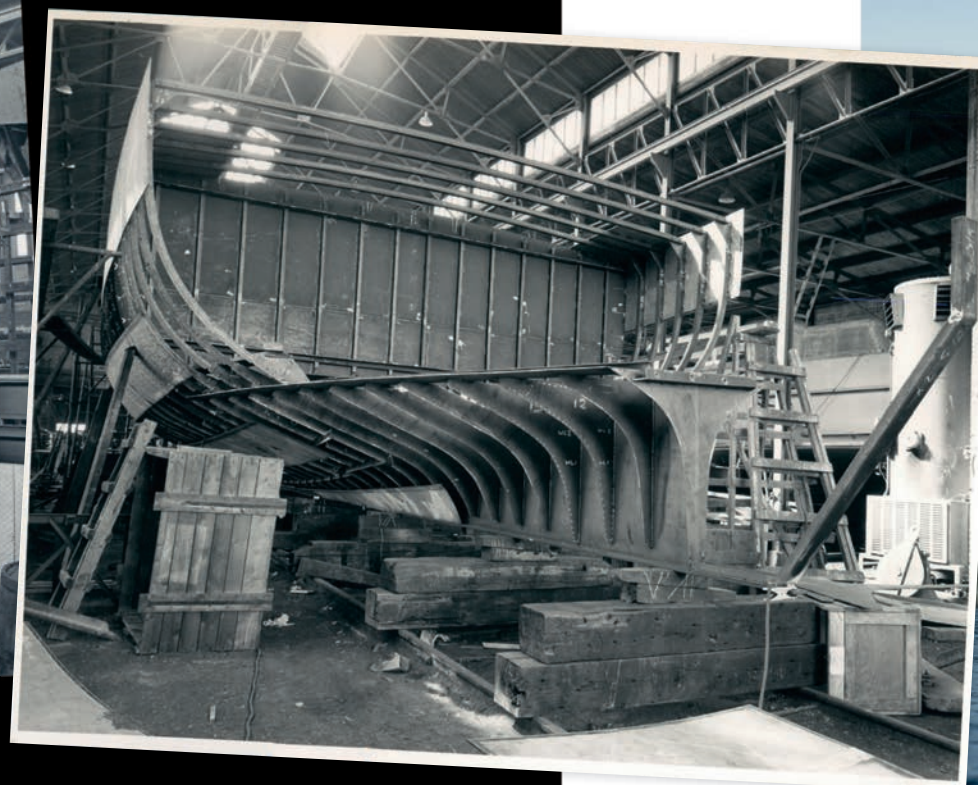
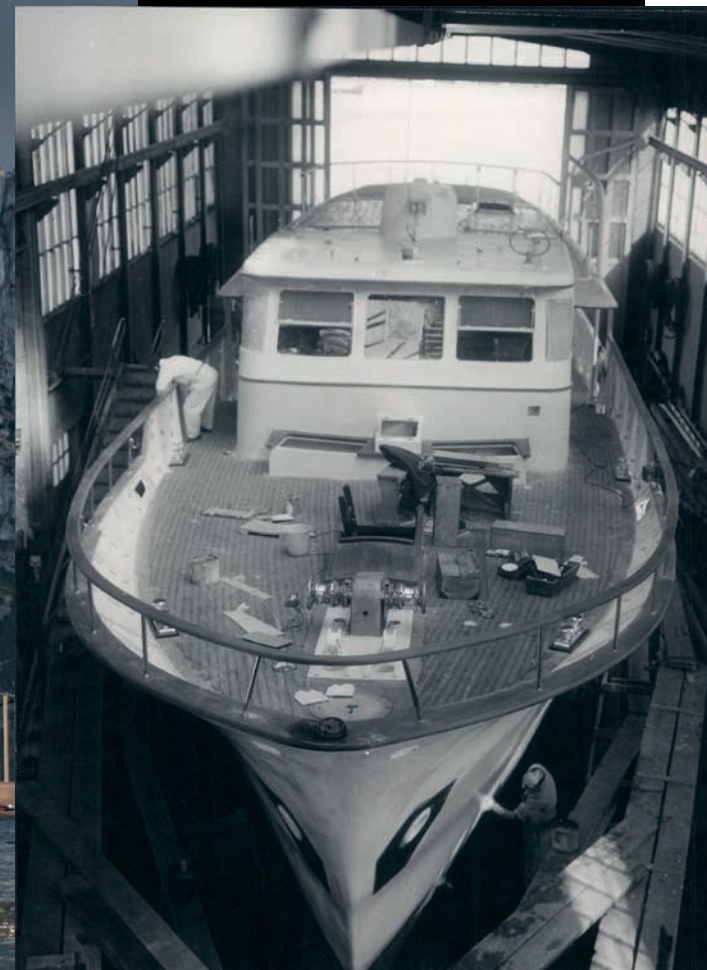
The engines are also extremely quiet. “The straight eight cylinders of the 8L3B, with an idle speed of 250rpm, run so smoothly it allows you to place a 50-pence coin on its side on the rocker cover and it will remain there for as long as you leave it,” says Michael Harrison of Gardner with more than a note of pride. “As it has such low power for the size, it is extremely under-

Classic appeal

Feadships from the 1960s and 70s have become design classics, and there is a very lively owners' association for the so-called Heritage Fleet. “In those days a 26-metre yacht was quite a thing, and De Vries designed and built them to last,” explains Feadship refit manager Ico Vergouwe. “This was quite unusual, I think, as a lot of yachts from those days are long gone. The choice for the Gardner main engines also proved to be a good one as they still run like sewing machines, as we say in Holland. After a major overhaul they look like gems in the engine room with their red enamelled rocker covers. The classic canoe stern design also has a lot of attraction nowadays. I get asked the question as to whether there is a nice canoe-stern Feadship on the market on a weekly basis. Sadly enough, we did not build a lot of them. Only 28 out of 271 had the canoe stern, and *Lady Beatrice* was the last one in 1993.”



The yacht was originally built with a clipper bow (below left and opposite page, top) but this was replaced in the refit with a bulbous bow, which increased the boat's efficiency and added buoyancy forward for greater comfort when under way



The galley has a counter with a wooden roll-shutter so that it can connect directly to the eight-place dining table (this picture and opposite page, top) when required



Below: the dashboard has a retro design with the original steering wheel and overhauled compass. At the touch of a button the state-of-the-art navigation display lowers out of view

stressed and very quiet. Indeed, the onboard generators are noisier.”

These engines were to be the stars of the refitted *Monara*, and many hours were spent determining how they should look after their refurbishment. “A real challenge was the aesthetics of the engines, and this was specified in great detail, down to the finish and colour on specific nuts and bolts,” says Harrison. Gardner’s normal single-pack grey enamel paint was eschewed in favour of two-pack epoxy (which is highly durable) flown in specially from the Netherlands by Feadship, while the cylinder heads were picked out in red. Each individual element of the engines was sprayed separately, then reassembled. “This gives an extremely

detailed finish, and also allows for the future servicing of any part.”

Back in Makkum, Feadship reinstalled the engines, then cut a large rectangular hole in the floor of the main saloon and fitted a triple-glazed soundproof window, so that owner Pels and his guests could admire the engines below. “It insulates the sound as much as if you had a steel cover,” he says. “It totally silences the noise.” Concealed LED lighting gives the engines real presence, with the colour variable from practical white to an eclectic party mood.

While they were at it, almost everything in the engine room was replaced, from the air conditioning and heating to the main switch panel and its tangle of wiring. The non-functional

Vosper Naiad stabilisers had their hydraulics completely replaced by a silent electric MATN system, and noise insulation was applied to the bulkheads and under the main deck. “You just don’t hear the new zero-speed stabilisers,” says Pels. “The boat doesn’t roll at all, whatever type of swell. Near Vigo we had gale force seven to eight winds and the boat was just perfect.”

Although the Feadship team advised in their original survey that much of the interior could be salvaged, Pels was determined to start again. Project manager Kees van den Hoek had shown them the Philippe Starck interior he oversaw for the refit of *Sultana*, and Pels and his wife Marjorie had fallen in love with the dark oak and light, natural upholstery.



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1969



2016



A stained-oak dresser has now been positioned under the saloon windows to starboard and serves as storage for glass and tableware, air-conditioning units and audiovisual equipment, including a pop-up television



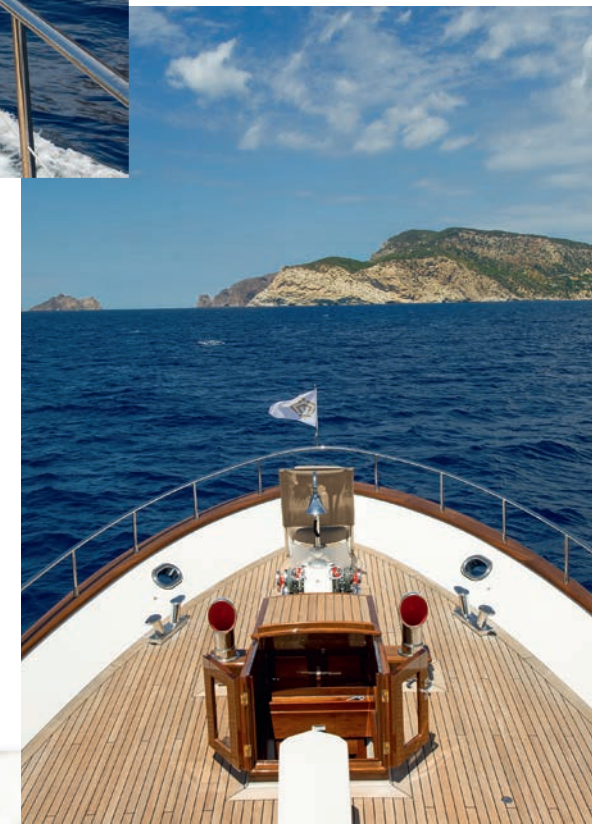
A new queen-size bed, complete with headboard, has been installed in the owner's suite, and the heavy wooden wall paneling removed. Without the old cupboards and wardrobes there is now plenty of natural light in the space



A second porthole was positioned under the existing one to bring extra daylight into the master bathroom. Priva-Lite glass in the bathroom door helps make the cabin itself lighter



Left: relaid in teak, the long sundeck offers lounging and dining spaces with the option of shelter from the sun under tensile "shade sails". Sunpads are available a few steps up on the bridge deck roof



"We took the Philippe Starck concept, but after that, it was very much Marjorie who gave new input and new ideas for how to make the interior of *Monara* special," says Pels. "We wanted a modern ship throughout that would be open from bow to stern."

The survey revealed that the bulkhead between the wheelhouse and the main saloon could be safely removed, and the bridge was also given a clever dual personality. Touch a button and the state-of-the-art navigation displays lower out of view, covered with a dark oak lid that turns the bridge into a buffet for entertaining. "Together with the original steering wheel and overhauled compass, a retro design dashboard was created," explains Vergouwe. "The raised wheelhouse area was also provided with two L-shaped sofas, one in each aft corner, with white oak-trimmed Corian tables. They wanted to use the wheelhouse very much as an owner's area."

Elsewhere, the boat has been returned to something closer to her original state. The copious cabinetry that you'd expect to see on a vessel of this vintage remains, but it is in a deep, stained oak. All traces of a half-hearted conversion to turn one of the guest cabins into a children's bunk room have been reversed – much lighter panelling had been used, which jarred with the rest of the accommodation. All the walls have been repainted in white, and the ceiling panels replaced so they are all uniform.

The owner's cabin, which runs the full beam of the lower deck amidships, has been

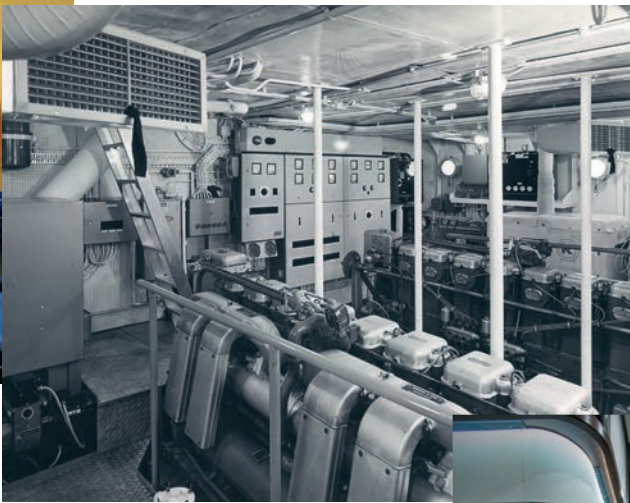
completely transformed. A new queen-size bed has been installed, this time with a headboard, while the heavy wooden panelling that clad every wall has vanished. Natural light is abundant now the old cupboards and wardrobes have been prised away from the hull. "We doubled the amount of windows in the master and bathroom by putting a second porthole under the existing ones to bring in some extra daylight," explains Vergouwe. Priva-Lite glass in the bathroom door further lightens the cabin and turns opaque at the touch of a button. Together with the deep woollen carpet in camel and neutral-toned





Monara's new bulbous bow improves her motion in a seaway and includes an underwater light and camera. A battery capacity of 8000Ah allows Monara to run dead-ship for eight hours

"I DON'T THINK IT WOULD HAVE MADE MUCH DIFFERENCE TO THE PRICE TO BUY A NEW ONE. BUT WHAT YOU GET IS TREMENDOUS QUALITY OF COURSE"



Above: televisions in each cabin are hidden behind one-way mirrors, so they are only visible when on. Below: the soundproof glass window in the saloon floor gives views of the engine room, and can open to double as an escape hatch

linen upholstery, this space breathes again and provides a calming retreat for the owner.

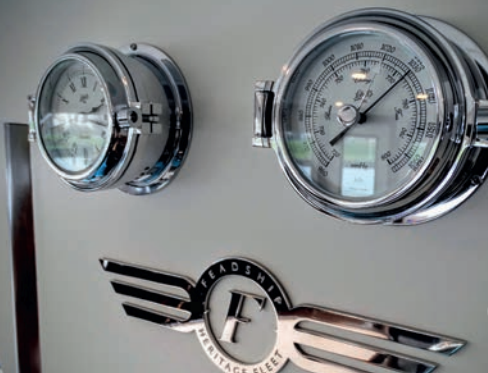
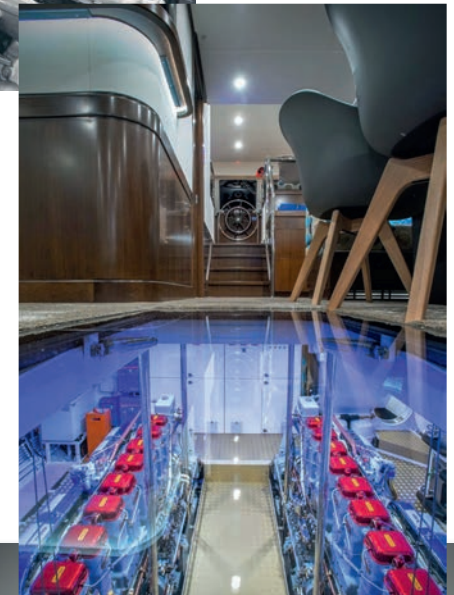
That seductive canoe stern has been put to excellent use, with a horseshoe of comfortable seating round it from where guests can enjoy the sights of their anchorage. There is dining here for five on folding chairs by ATEP, and the area has been christened "the pavilion". The large sundeck above is supported by slim, slanting steel posts which barely disturb the view. A cleverly engineered hydraulic passerelle has been hidden in the stern without disturbing the boat's magical lines.

The sundeck itself runs much of the length of the yacht, offering lounging and dining spaces in the dappled shade of tensile "shade sails". Sunbeds aft by Tribù provide enough space for 10 sun worshippers, and can transform into seating when an integrated table is raised. The decks have been completely relaid in teak, and the funnel and mast structure have also been adapted to house a gas barbecue. A few steps here give access to a sea of upholstery on top of the bridge deck roof - the best spot on the boat

for soaking up some Mediterranean heat or watching the sun set with a cocktail.

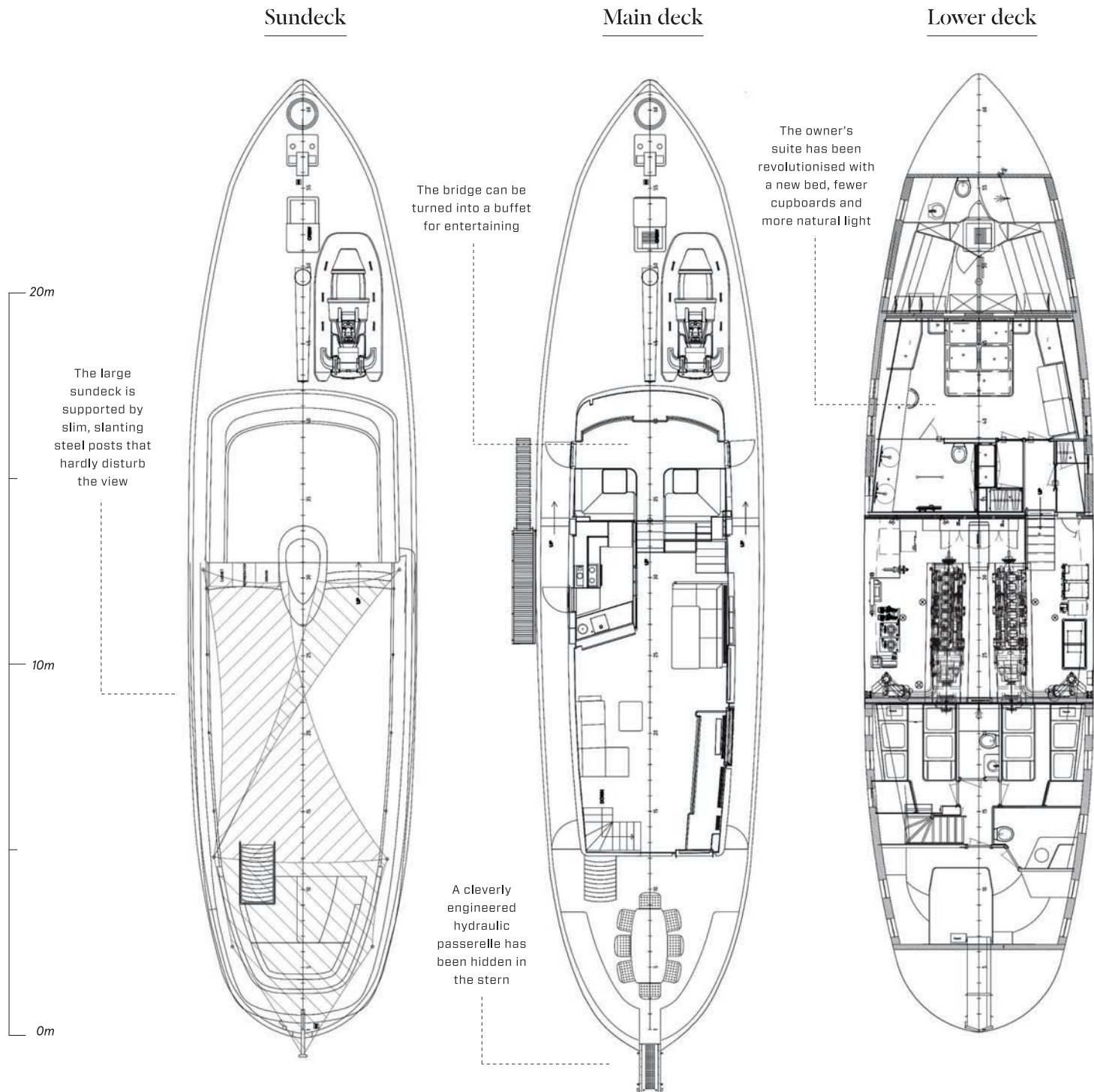
I ask Pels if he thought it was worth it, and he falters for the first time in our long interview. "In the end, the restoration price was higher than we thought," he says. "I don't think it would have made much difference to the price to buy a new one. But what you get is tremendous quality, of course. You can't compare a Škoda to a Rolls-Royce. Money is no object at Feadship."

Then this lifelong sailor with several Atlantic crossings under his belt sets off on a different tack, and is soon lost again in the joys of his baby. "What I like most is when I sit in the cockpit next to the steering wheel on the starboard side, I can look in one go to the end of the stern, which is wonderful when you are in long, rolling ocean waves." It is perhaps the most eloquent answer he could have offered. ■



Monara

Feadship

**LOA** 25.81m**LWL** 22.6m**Beam** 5.87m**Draught** (full load) 2.13m**Gross tonnage**
83GT**Engines**

2 x Gardner 8L3B diesels

Speed max/cruise

10/8 knots

Range at 8 knots

1,890nm

Generators1 x 27kW Weichai;
2 x Niehoff alternators**Fuel capacity**

7,550 litres

Freshwater capacity

4,100 litres

Tender

1 x Williams TurboJet 325

Owners/guests 8**Crew** 4**Construction**Steel hull and aft walls;
aluminium wheelhouse;
steel sundeck**Naval architecture**Feadship De Voogt
Naval Architects**Exterior styling**Feadship in co-operation
with Kees van den Hoek**Interior design**Feadship in co-operation
with Kees van den Hoek**Builder/year**Feadship De Vries/1969
Aalsmeer, the Netherlands**Refit yard/year**Feadship De Vries/
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