

ISSUE ELEVEN
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The Superyacht

TRUTH • OPINION KNOWLEDGE • IDEAS & SUPERYACHT OWNER INSIGHT



OWNER

ALESSANDRO FALCIAI

Enjoying the last of the summer wine with the owner of *Adamas II*.

EMERAUDE

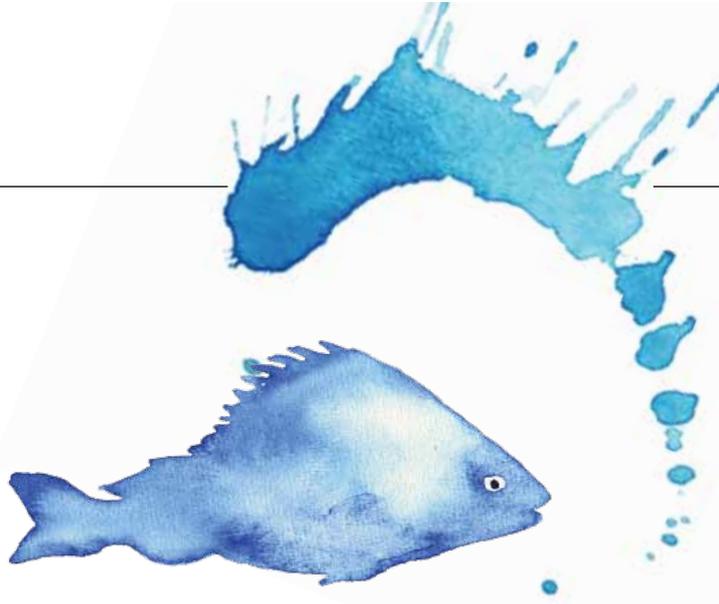
Eric Merlin's unique journey to build a replica of a 1900s paddleboat using an old postcard.

THE FULL MONTE

Part of a new wave of marina communities, Porto Montenegro is more than just a place to berth.

QUANTIFYING QUALITY

Should we do more to quantify a yacht's true value before it goes on the market?



LAST OF THE SUMMER WINE

– WORDS AND IMAGES
BY JUSTIN RATCLIFFE

As the owner of *Adamas II*, a classic motoryacht built by Dauphin Yachts in Singapore and launched in 1987, Alessandro Falciai brings his experience as a seasoned yachtsman to his new role as the proprietor of the Mondo Marine shipyard in Savona, Italy. Our European editor Justin Ratcliffe joined the entrepreneur aboard his yacht in Ibiza at the end of last season.

After arriving on the island on a balmy day in early September, a 30-minute drive from the airport took me to the Blue Marlin club in Cala Jondal. A conservation area of natural beauty overlooked by pine-clad hills with a crescent beach of sand, pebbles sloping down to the glittering water and the Blue Marlin providing a taste of Ibiza's famous nightlife, it was easy to understand why Alessandro Falciai had chosen the anchorage for a last weekend aboard *Adamas II* at the end of a summer season in the Balearics. I was picked up from the club's rickety dock and taken out to the yacht anchored a short distance offshore. Early for my appointment with the owner, I sipped an espresso and enjoyed the sunshine as I waited for Falciai, who had taken his 13m Alenyacht fast tender to a secluded spot across the bay to indulge in his customary morning dip. When he returned looking fit and refreshed, we sat down at the dining table on the aft deck to enjoy a light breakfast of freshly squeezed orange juice accompanied by slivers of toast and delicious jamón Pata Negra.

"A large and comfortable tender is a must as far as I'm concerned," announced Falciai, indicating the tender tied up alongside. "The Alenyacht is fast and agile and perfect for day trips in the Mediterranean. Obviously it's too big to stow on board a yacht the size of *Adamas II*, so it's towed behind or follows the mothership wherever we go."

Falciai acquired the Mondo Marine

brand last year following an extensive and ongoing refit of his yacht. He was so impressed with the yard's engineering capabilities that he opened negotiations with the Mondo Group, which was looking to divest itself of a struggling asset at a time of economic hardship and an agreement was reached within three months. But what makes Falciai unusual as an investor in the industry is his naval background: both his father and uncle were admirals and he studied at Livorno's Naval Academy, which included a stint as a naval cadet aboard the sail training vessel *Amerigo Vespucci*. Moreover, he is one of those rare owners with a licence to pilot a vessel over 500gt.

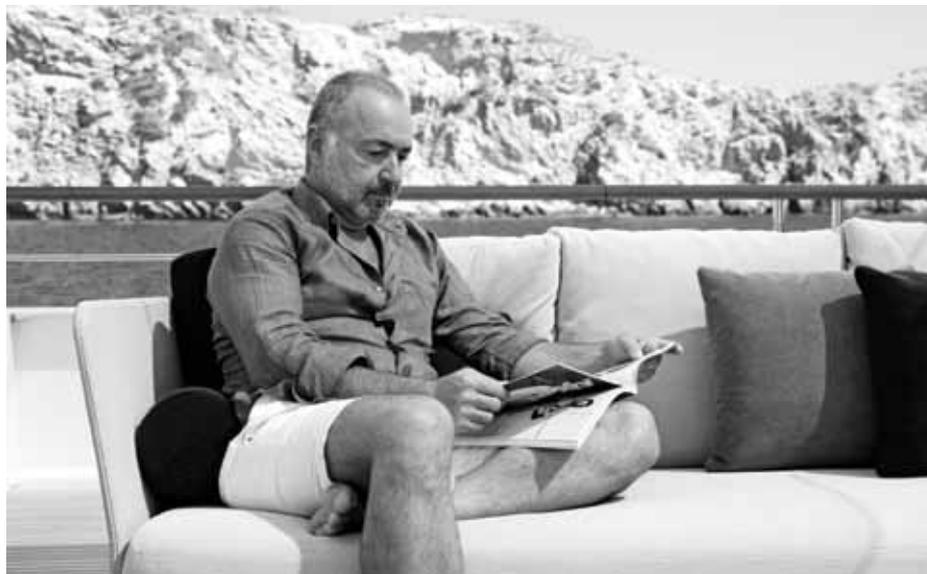
"On the *Vespucci* we sailed from Livorno to the Balearics, Brest, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Edinburgh and back," he recounted. "Working a tall ship is an experience that stays with you for the rest of your life; it makes for excellent sea training and teaches you about the importance of order and discipline."

He went on to study aeronautics at Naples University and worked part-time at a local boatyard alongside the master shipwrights, before taking up a post as a systems engineer specialising in fluid mechanics at the European Space Research and Technology Centre (ESTEC) in the Netherlands. On returning to Italy, he went into the telecommunications industry and held top management positions with a number of major companies before setting up Digital Multimedia 



Technologies (DMT), which was quoted on the stock exchange and later merged with Mediaset. He decided to buy 54m *Adamas II* (formerly *Azzam*) as a replacement for his 86-footer after the merger went through in 2011.

"I first saw the yacht in a small port near Athens and was immediately attracted by her elegant lines based on a classic Feadship design," he told me. "Previously I'd owned quite modern, planing boats, but I was interested in displacement motoryachts for the space and comfort they provide."



Despite falling for the yacht at first sight, he was keen to introduce modifications to the underwater architecture and chose Mondo Marine to carry out the engineering work. The first task was to lengthen the stern section of the hull (increasing the LOA to nearly 58m) and restyle the transom, adding steps leading down to the swim platform. Drawing on his knowledge of fluid dynamics, Falciai requested comparative studies of different propellers and decided to replace the four-blade props with smaller ones with six blades, thereby increasing the hull clearance and reducing resonance and vibration noise in the process. A 100kW Kohler generator was added for quieter operation at night and a bulbous bow and zero-speed stabilisers installed, while the rudder was moved aft to take into account the longer hull. The result of these and other interventions meant that the yacht performs more quietly and efficiently; her top speed increased from 15 to 18 knots with a similar increase in cruising speed

without affecting fuel consumption.

"All the engineering studies were carried out in-house by Mondo," said Falciai.

"Refits such as these can be quite complex and sometimes it's easier to have a green field and build new. Given my technical background, I was a demanding client and you could say the experience served as my due diligence before acquiring the shipyard."

Modifications above the waterline included rearranging the sundeck by relocating the tenders stowed there to create a more guest-friendly space,

complete with professional DJ system, cinema projector and a cooling water nebuliser under the deck awning. The crew tender was moved into the forepeak in front of the Jacuzzi and another was replaced with the Alenyacht.

Adamas II returned to the Mondo Marine facility in Savona this winter to continue its refit, which will focus on the interior and likely combine the two owner's suites in the original Middle Eastern-style layout. The bathrooms have already been modernised, but the rest of the interior décor, which includes an unusual camel hide lacquered finish, will remain for the time being. "The attraction of yachting for most owners in the Mediterranean is the open-air lifestyle," he continued. "So I've prioritised the outside rather than the inside and adapted my needs to the existing interior design."

For Falciai and his family, the cruising season starts in May and continues through to October, weather permitting. His regular routine when on board begins with a morning swim before a light breakfast, 



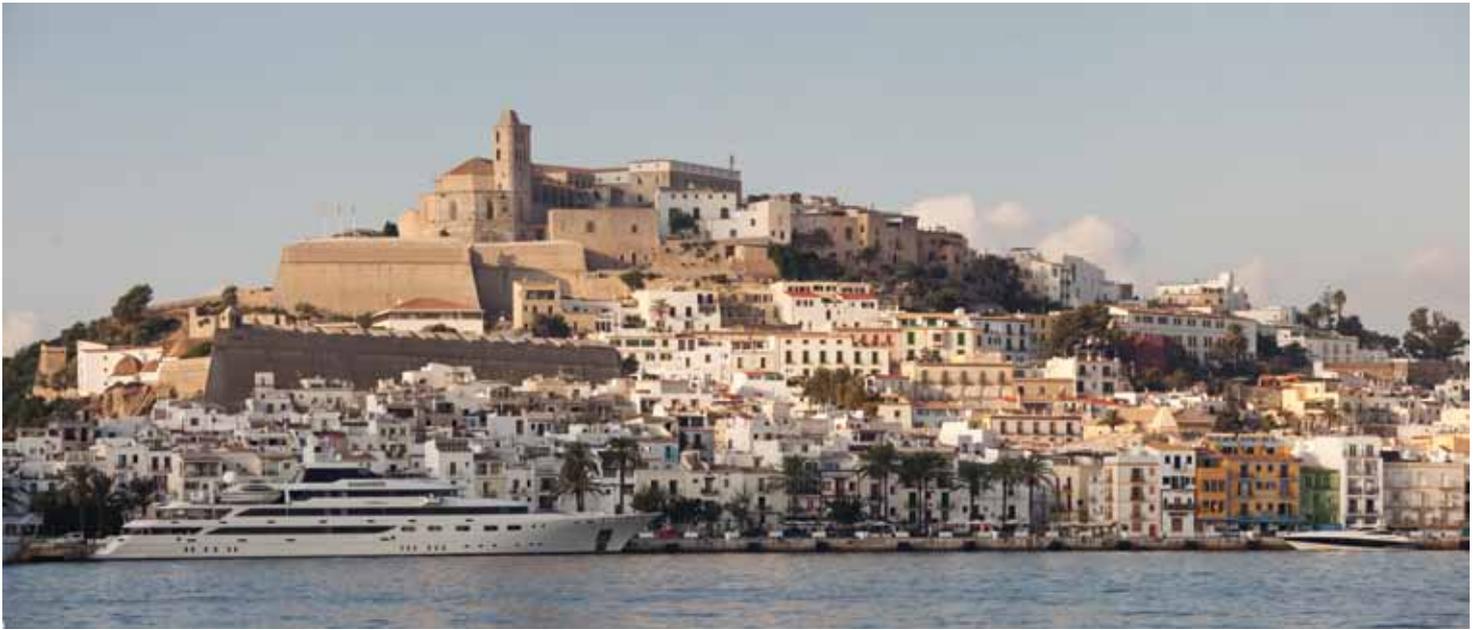


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Top left: Falciai acquired the Mondo Marine group in 2012.

Top right: *Adamas II* anchored in Cala Jondal.

Bottom right: Alessandro Falciai prepares to go spear fishing.



“IT’S NOT JUST A QUESTION OF AMENITIES AND COMFORT; FINDING THE RIGHT CREW FOR YOU IS MORE OF AN ART THAN A SCIENCE. I THINK THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A BREAKING-IN PROCESS AND IT’S UNREALISTIC TO ASSUME THAT EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE FROM THE WORD GO.”
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followed by a longer excursion in the Alenyacht to go spear fishing, either with snorkel or scuba gear. We interrupted our conversation to embark on one such trip and I joined him in the tender as he powered across the bay with one hand on the helm and the other taking a business call on his cell phone.

Having anchored in the sheltered waters below the steep cliffs of Cala Jondal, a favourite haunt for schools of fish, Falciai donned a wetsuit and mask, was handed a spear gun by his crewman and slipped into the sea off the stern platform. He was back half an hour later with two sea bass in a net bag, which he handed to the chef when we returned aboard the yacht. After a quick shower, we sat down to a late lunch of chilled, fish tartare and fresh sea bass *al sale* accompanied by a bottle of crisp white wine, while the conversation turned to manning the yacht and making the most of ownership.

“Enjoying your boat to the full depends on putting a number of subjective factors in place,” he cautioned. “It’s not just a

question of amenities and comfort; finding the right crew for you is more of an art than a science. I think there will always be a breaking-in process and it’s unrealistic to assume that everything will be fine from the word go. You have to be aware that it takes experience, organisation and an element of luck.”

I left *Adamas II* with slight sunburn and the memory of fresh fish and *Pinot Grigio* on my palate; surely one of the most delightful legacies of a Mediterranean summer. It was the owner’s last sojourn on board before the yacht returned to Savona to continue her refit and his attention had already turned to more autumnal pastimes: a trip to Scotland the following weekend for the start of the grouse season. □

Top: Ibiza old town.

Bottom: The owner at the helm of his 13m Alenyacht tender.



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