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TANKOA 164' MY VERTIGE: Scaling New Heights

Delivered in time for a busy Mediterranean charter season this summer and due to debut at the Monaco Yacht Show in September, the eagerly second project from boutique Italian builder Tankoa Yachts is already delighting her owner. Exceeding all expectations during pre-delivery sea trials, we spoke to the highly experienced team behind both the project and brand that is fast establishing itself amongst the highest quality of European builders.

Highly efficient naval architecture and a light alloy build provide Vertige with a remarkable power:performace ratio. On two derated MTU engines of just 1,000hp this 164' hit 16.4-knots with a half-load in sea trials and cruise at over 14-knots. Her range, at delivery speed, is an ocean crossing 6,000nM.

In an edgy contemporary font that finds harmony with the chiseled exterior lines, emblazoned across the sculpted transom of Tankoa's second delivery is the French word 'Vertige'. From the owner's mother tongue it translates to 'a fear of heights' in English. While the magnificence of the 164' (50m) produced by the Genovese shipyard may well generate a bout of heady dizziness, it appears to be something of a misnomer for a shipyard that is consistently scaling new heights. Despite this being a new brand, the assemblage of highly experienced players behind Tankoa is achieving their lofty ambitions in terms of controlled quality output.

With increasingly restrictive regulations, the 500GT threshold appears to progressively be an important limit for many owners. Recent vogue has seen shipyards pack the volume into ever-shorter yachts, often 140 to 150', with the inherent aesthetic sacrifice. When Tankoa approached their longstanding design partner, Francesco Paszkowski, for their new 164' project based on naval architecture by the late Ing. Visibelli, however, they laid down some immovable parameters. Amongst them were: a plumb bow, a gigantic aft deck, five or six cabins, and the most elegant and fuel efficient 50m on the market. They also stipulated the sub-500GT volume should be respected without artifice, ensuring the vessel would be accepted by any flag authority.
In 2014, furnished with the early 3D renderings, Michel Karsenti of Yachtology presented the concept to a 110' Canados owner, introduced through Aquila Yachting. Taking onboard the highly experienced owner's feedback, the GA and details were fine-tuned ahead of the next meeting at the Monaco Yacht Show. By early 2015 a contract was signed, delivery scheduled for 2017, and within six weeks metal was being cut and construction commenced on project S510.

Eschewing the traditional steel hull and aluminum superstructure, though full displacement the S510 has been engineered entirely in light alloy. The reason behind it being twofold: firstly to eliminate the inevitable corrosion that develops at the junction of differing metals, and secondly to achieve contractual performance specifications. S501 was to be powered by derated MTU SV400054R engines, producing just 1,000hp (746 kW) yet achieving 16-knots top speed, cruising at 14-knots with a half load. A considerable challenge with its' 30' (9.4m) beam, but even prior to build Tankoa CEO Euro Contenti was confident of achieving Vertige's incredible performance to power ratios. He was vindicated when Vertige hit 16.4-knots with 60 tons of fuel and ten tons of water onboard in a sizeable swell during sea trials.

Aside from appearing at the MYS and FLIBS shows later this year, Vertige is now available through Northrop & Johnson on the charter market for the Med summer and Caribbean winter seasons. We asked Captain Filippo Belli, a very experienced yacht captain, about his confidence in the TransAt crossing ahead. "Having already cruised Italy the South of France, Sicily, Greece and Turkey, I have no issues," he told us. "With almost 6,000nM range at 12-knots and over 4,000 at 14-knots, I will not hesitate to make a detour if weather systems dictate. Also, we have not had a single technical issue since the boat has been delivered, thanks to build engineer Albert McIlroy who followed the entire construction for the owner and the tremendous technical team at Tankoa. Plus, every piece of equipment is backed up with redundancy systems."

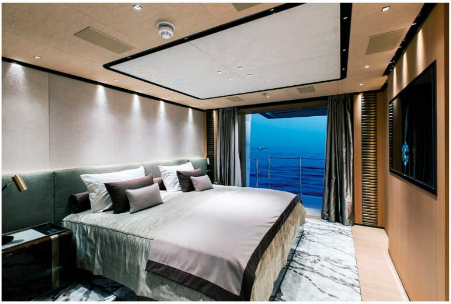
The main deck terrace is vast and the vistas from the aft facing sofas are breathtaking. There's even drop down lateral terraces to optimize the sense of connecting with the ocean.

Before even stepping aboard Vertige one is immediately struck by low profile and impressive mirror-like finish of her Awlgrip paint system. The high bow, drawn back to the pilothouse windshield, exaggerates her sporty styling. When at anchor

Her transom fold out to create a 11' wide swim platform, enhancing the beach club area where the owner has incorporated a gym with adjacent steam shower facilities. With the 23' SACS tender and two watercrafts launched from their transverse garage and foredeck respectively, the area becomes a veritable watersports center.

Cleverly, Casprini has made light transition between the bright exterior and the more intimate main salon and skylounge feel very natural.

Ascending to the cockpit from the swim platform, we find a gigantic sun-pad and an aft facing sofa for 16 guests that provides stunning panoramas–it's a space that is seldom found even on 60-70m yachts. Questioned about this feature, Karsenti explained "In order to remain under 500GT in a 50m it's not a secret that the superstructure cannot be extended too far aft. But, this being said, we also wanted to create oversized exterior entertainment spaces because this is where most guests spend their time onboard. Vertige's aft deck exceeds anything else in this category, and with the two lateral foldout terraces proximity with the water is available that most 50m yachts lack. This deck is also equipped with a Duplex awning system that can remain in place even when the boat is running at full speed."



Terraces to both port and starboard provide a unique experience in the owner's cabin. Fabricated in two panels the upper can be let open during gentle cruises.

Above, on the aft upper deck is a commensurately generous space, with dining for 12 guests. The owner, being a gourmand and oenophile, requested a space to wine and dine his guests in style, so Tankoa obliged with a transverse dining table, bespoke wraparound sofa for 16, retractable TV and a shade system comprising of a bimini and two large parasols. This consummate entertainer theme continues on the sundeck, where a long bar serves a salon area protected by the hardtop with integrated louvers, plus a large sunpad and Jacuzzi for six forward to supplement the aft loungers. Wrapping up the exterior spaces, we found a delightful forward solarium and lounge forward of the wheelhouse. With sunpads and sofas protected by shade sails it really is the place to enjoy a cooling breeze both when at anchor and underway.

Details like the bureau/vanity in the master staterooms, 300-bottle wine cellar, on-deck VIP and many practical inclusions elevate Vertige into a category usually occupied by much larger yachts.

From expansive exterior to more intimate and homely interior, the contrasting tone is set in the main salon where Margherita Casprini has ingeniously included a black leather box, "to immediately and subconsciously adjust the eyes to the lower light levels," she explains. And it works; the transition from bright sunlight to artificial interior lighting feels quitevery natural. Casprini went on to reveal, "the owner wanted a modern but warm interior and also wanted to feel that he is onboard a boat. Thus, the use of brass or teak provided both warmth and a marine motif, even if the overall effect is very contemporary."

The owner requested a modern but warm interior, through the use of brass and teak Casprini provided both warmth and a marine motif within a contemporary design.

Moving from the lobby area into the main salon, framed by glass that extends almost from the floor to ceiling the comfortable U-shaped and transverse sofas invite lounging and relaxing. Soothing neutral tones prevail, accented by sculpted golden wooden doors and brass insert details that punctuate the teak walls finished in a soft satin varnish. Subtly partitioning the salon and dining area are two symmetrical library shelves, which exhibit the rounded edges that all joinery is finished with. The forward bulkhead, always a feature wall, Casprini has clad in Jerusalem stone with custom brass inserts to create an understated conversation piece.

Serving the dining area to port is a pantry that leads down to the lower deck galley and crew area, while from the starboard lobby one can access the four guest cabins of the lower deck: three are equipped with queen size beds and one with two sliding single berths and a Pullman bunk. Each cabin exhibits the same interior features, but in different colors, while the en-suites are fitted with custom furniture of rounded Jerusalem stone with brass inserts to provide continuity. Back up the guest stairs, past the 300-bottle wine cellar, we find that somewhat unusually for a 50m, the main deck hosts a VIP cabin along with the owner's staterooms, again something reminiscent of much larger yachts.

On charter for the Med and Caribbean seasons, Vertige's sharp lines create an imposing presence. Note also her unqiue 'fly through' master cabin with twin terraces.

The VIP en-suite, dressed in a mellow yellow onyx is located aft of the cabin that benefits from a huge portside window. Just forward is the full-beam master accessed via a bureau/vanity area. Once in the master suite one further appreciates the exacting talent and engineering expertise that Tankoa employs, for to both port and starboard the hull opens onto magnificent lateral terraces creating an airy waterside loft ambience. As these terraces open in two panels, there is the unique option to open just the top panels when cruising slowly on flat water, ensuring a cooling breeze during your afternoon siesta. The master en-suite, with the red onyx dressing of the shower cubicle contrasting deliciously with the white onyx basin and splashback, occupies almost the entire forward section, with the remainder devoted to a dressing room on the starboard side.

On the upper deck the wheelhouse naturally occupies the forward area, with the captain's cabin conveniently located to starboard. Aft, the serene atmosphere of the sky lounge invites guests with enticingly deep couches and great views through expansive glazing. Buffering the wheelhouse and sky lounge is the captain's accommodation and the portside pantry, plus a very thoughtfully positioned day head for the crew beside the pilothouse. It's details like this 'big boat' thinking and experience that really sets Vertige apart in this sector. Speaking with the owner's build representative, Albert McIlroy, he concurs and points out the extraordinary level of the standard equipment specification too.

"With S501, Tankoa Yachts has greatly improved their time schedule management and operational processes," he told us. "They truly have a Teutonic approach that often leaves me speechless for an Italian builder and the quality of every material and system–from the wiring, to the electronics, safety and engineering systems–they are truly first class. In fact, if they find a better system or material is developed and released after contract specifications, they'll often fit it without any additional charge to the owner."

McIlroy then came up with a statement that stunned us into silence for a moment and we think it appropriate he has the last word. "For me however, the advanced engineering quality is truly quantifiable and can be seen not just in the yacht but in numbers. A careful study and construction ensures there's zero vibration and thus sound levels are reduced to virtual silence, below 50dB in the VIP and owner's cabins. In fact, in the pre-delivery survey sound levels were a full 10-percent lower than contractually specified!". From low sound to an extraordinary high performance to power ratio, Vertige set dizzying standards and is yet another testament to the Tankoa shipyard's inexorable rise.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

LOA: 163' 7" (49.90m)
Max Beam: 30' 8" (9.40m)
Draft (full load): 7' 2" (2.20m)
Displacement (light): 301 t
Displacement (half): 352 t
Displacement (full): 392 t
Generators: 2x 125kW
Maximum speed: 16-knots
Cruising Speed: 14-knots
Delivery Speed: 12-knots

Range @ 12-knots: 5,000nM
Fuel Capacity: 17,171 US Gal (65m3)
Water Capacity: 4,385 US Gal (16.6m3)
Engines: 2x MTU 8V 4000 54R
Power @ 1,600rpm: 2x 1,000hp (2x 746kW)
Builder: Tankoa Yachts (Genoa, Italy)
Naval Architecture: Visibelli/Tankoa Yachts
Exterior Design: Francesco Paszkowski Design
Interior Design: Francesco Paszkowski/ Margherita Casprini

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