



CLASSED AND CLASSY

STORY BY MARILYN M. MOWER

Alysia carries 36 charter guests with all the comforts of a private yacht, which is just as Andreas Liveras planned it.



STEPHANE BRAVIN



The signature marble Sophia Dafnia introduces in the main salon reappears in the spa and guest baths for a unified theme. Gloss surfaces find their counterpoint in rich chenilles.

THERE IS NO MISSING THE FACT THAT AT 85.3 meters (280 feet) *Alysia* is a very large yacht. But for her debonair Cypriot owner Andreas Liveras, she is so much more than a pile of tastefully assembled steel, marble, silks and wool. She is a tangible manifestation of the success of his third career and of the way this gentleman is happiest when he is entertaining or bringing pleasure to other people. He can now do so in a very large way.

Liveras recently celebrated his 71st birthday, a fact that is hard to believe for those who try vainly to keep up with his active lifestyle. He rises before dawn and has more done by lunch than most anyone else could hope to accomplish in an entire day. These days his work is operating the first pair of purpose-built, SOLAS-classed charter yachts, the new *Alysia* and her 2004 sistership, *Annaliessa*. Although Liveras has been in the yacht charter business for 20 years, these are the first two yachts that he had a hand in designing from a blank sheet of paper, and he speaks of them as fondly as he speaks of his granddaughters, for whom the yachts are named. He loves the mix of classic and contemporary elements in their interiors, such as limed-oak wall panels and sweeping marble and stainless steel staircases with lavish Oriental silks and French provincial side chairs.

Liveras' habit of rising before the sun likely remains from his youth on a family farm in Cyprus. Even then the young man thought big. His plan was to bring the first combine harvester to the island. He would use it to speed his own work and then hire himself and the combine out to neighboring farms. The harvester was formidably expensive, and to secure it, 26-year-old Liveras put up his house as collateral. For two years things proceeded according to plan until the day he lost control of the machine and it sped over a cliff, falling 300 feet to the sea. Liveras was lucky »



Nikos Dafnias of Alpha Marine created this assertive, modern face. The lobby, right, and the spa and beauty center, opposite page, benefit from the 47-foot beam.

enough to jump off in time, but unlucky enough to have not insured the combine.

Enter career No. 2. Liveras needed to earn money quickly to recoup, and it wasn't going to be in Cyprus, a place that seems to alternate between sleepy obscurity and fractious political upheaval. He landed a job in London with Fleur de Lys Patisseries,

Over the next 19 years, Liveras took the company from a six-man operation in a rented basement in South Kensington to the biggest patisserie in Europe with 1,400 employees. The secret to his success was the frozen Black Forest Gateau. At age 50, he sold the company for \$48 million and retired. His first idea was to buy a yacht and sail around the world. Jonathan Beckett of Nigel Burgess sold him a 27-meter Benetti named *Lina III*.

"Retirement was the worst year of my life," laughs Liveras. "I was so bored that I was up at five washing the boat and waking the crew." Liveras never went around the world in *Lina III*; it didn't take long to *see* that he would need a larger boat for





Liveras is also an astute observer of the charter industry. Unlike most charter yacht owners who remain invisible behind the scenes, Liveras can usually be found aboard one of his yachts, at the world's major charter shows greeting brokers, introducing his crew and throwing fashionable parties. He's also watching and listening, gathering information with a finely tuned businessman's radar.

When customers began chartering yachts in tandem as the only way to bring along an entire company or family in the post-MCA years (which limit private charter yachts to a maximum of 12 passengers), Liveras sought another solution: bigger yachts. Both *Princess Tanya* and *Altair* were operated provisionally carrying 18 guests. »



STEPHANE BRAVIN

that. Beckett was happy to oblige. "Jonathan made sure I bought two other yachts. Then I owned a fleet, and I waived good-bye to retirement.

"The third of the three yachts was 42-meter *Albacora*, and Jonathan convinced me to put it in the charter show in Antigua. Twenty-two years ago, chartering in

the Caribbean was mostly sailboats. *Albacora* was one of the largest available, and we chartered her for four thousand dollars a day," recalls Liveras.

Liveras fell in love with chartering, and the chartering industry reciprocated. With *Rosenkavalier*, then *Princess Tanya*, *Princess Lauren* and *Altair*, Liveras grew into larger boats and more discriminating clientele. Although he says he has worked harder in the last 20 years than ever before, he winks and notes, "It's with a nice class of people."





Guest suites are at main-deck level or above. The five-room master suite, top right, has 180-degree views and a private alfresco lounge forward on the upper deck.

Few bystanders would have predicted the success of yachts carrying 18 passengers. Fewer still might have predicted clients chartering two yachts in tandem. "Of course, tandem charters are not without their problems. It is difficult to keep both yachts to the same schedule, especially if bunkering is required. Then someone always feels that one

yacht has a better chef or better accommodations," says Liveras. So he came up with another solution: bigger yachts built to SOLAS standards; yachts that meet commercial passenger ship standards, yet still look like and operate like private yachts.

"Everyone is concerned about safety on board—especially if they are chartering with their entire family," says Liveras. "We see market growth driven by two things: the ability to carry 36 guests or more and the desire for the highest possible safety."

Of course, being Andreas Liveras, simply responding to the market isn't in his character. He has to deliver a little bit extra, something that becomes a market driver itself.

"Welcome to the heart of *Alysia*," says Liveras as he broadly sweeps his arm around an enormous Roman bath. The walls, floor and soaking tub are all the same beautiful marble, bright white with a soft gray vein. Four translucent panels placed





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equidistant around the room slowly shift through the color spectrum, creating a soothing yet ever-changing environment. Marshalled around the Jacuzzi are luxurious teak deck chairs arrayed with beckoning cushions, towels and pillows. The air is perfumed—aromatherapy for whatever ails you. Spiraling off the central Roman bath are separate men's and women's saunas, steam rooms, a cold plunge pool and locker rooms with showers, treatment rooms for massage and skin care, a hair and nail salon, a gymnasium and a fantastic children's playroom. While the aforementioned may be becoming de rigueur, *Alysia's* health and beauty center has two exclusive treatment services: the Caracalla bath—a thalassotherapy bath with massaging jets and light therapy—and the heated Cleopatra bath—a cocooning tub where guests in seaweed wraps relax in near weightlessness.

For charter guests who view the cruise as entrée to a makeover, *Alysia's* chef can design a specific spa menu,

working with the spa manager and the yacht's onboard nurse to enhance the therapy program.

The origins of *Alysia's* spa began with *Princess Tanya's* beauty salon and staff masseur. With *Annaliese*, Liveras and his niece Sophia Dafnia, who helps design the yachts, let their imaginations run riot. The process resulted in the installation of a floor-to-ceiling aquarium, supplied for its soothing effects on tense individuals. While *Alysia's* spa is even larger, the aquarium was omitted to allow for more treatment space. "You learn things as you go along," Liveras says candidly.

But the health and beauty center doesn't mean attention to other areas is lacking. The sun deck features a large Jacuzzi and seating areas forward with a lounge area aft encompassing the helipad. In addition to crew boats, *Alysia* has two 25-foot covered tenders meeting SOLAS rescue-boat standards.

One of the things Liveras has learned is that his customers are grateful for a self-contained environment where their security »



The sky lounge aft on the bridge deck, one deck above the cinema, right, is relaxed and cordial. The main-deck dining salon, bottom, can serve the entire party at once.

and privacy are assured. For ultra-high-profile individuals, even going ashore to Les Thermes Marins spa in Monte Carlo or to dinner within the exclusive Palazzo Sasso could present logistical or security nightmares. A yacht is ever so much nicer than taking an entire floor in a hotel, plus it eliminates the issue of a public elevator or lobby when coming and going. Which is not to say that *Alysia* doesn't have an elevator—she does—and a very spectacular lobby, one with enormous slabs of book-matched blue Brazilian Makauba marble.

Aboard *Alysia*, the color scheme is a relaxing blend of colors chosen from nature's palette and not unlike the colors of Cyprus—wheat, golden maize, olive and deep clay reds splashed against gentle, cream-colored handmade carpets and sofas. It works well with the sea views afforded by large windows. Varied seating areas allow each guest to choose a personal space of greatest psychological comfort within rooms that are large enough to entertain grandly or accommodate the entire entourage. The guest staterooms include a two-room VIP suite and a 1,313-square-foot master with an integrated cabin for staff or child, a private deck, a personal office and a sumptuous bath that appears carved of solid Afion marble. Within the yacht's »





There's no mistaking the SOLAS certification of this helideck, designed to land the largest personal jet helicopter.

47-foot beam, there is ample room for each of the 14 regular guest suites to include a sofa, a desk and a large bath with both tub and shower wrapped in Michelangelo marble.

Liveras originally planned to hedge his bets by offering seven ownership shares in one of the \$111 million-plus yachts. He even created a concept called SeaChange to market and manage the enterprise, but he pulled the plug on the idea. Both yachts are far too busy in the 2006 season—at \$120,000 per day—to need any such cushioning device. He is also planning a larger yacht capable of carrying 48 guests.

Annaliese and *Alysia* have a successful formula: Anticipate everything and offer the best possible European-style service. In forecasting users' needs, the yacht provides everything from slippers to a business center and LAN computer service, a library and a cinema, a 500-bottle wine cellar, Bose surround sound music and plasma TVs throughout, a handicap-accessible cabin and a two-bed medical suite with a 24-hour nurse.

As for service, Liveras personally chooses staff with input from Charter Manager Martina Rakus. Generally, personnel are not »

READER'S RESOURCE

Liveras Yachts, Le Shangri-La, 11 Boulevard Albert ter, Monte Carlo, 98000, Monaco, tel: 377 97 97 45 10, fax: 377 97 97 45 13, www.liverasyachts.com

Builder: Neorion Shipyards

Year launched: 2005

Naval architecture: Alpha Marine/H. Poulas

Interior design: Alpha Marine/ Sophia Dafnia, Liveras Yachts

Exterior styling: Alpha Marine

Classification/ certification: Det Norske Veritas/SOLAS PV/ISPS Code

LOA: 280' (85.3 m)

Beam: 47'5" (14.45 m)

Draft: 13'6" (4.15 m)

Max. displacement: 3,296 tn

Max. speed: 18 kn

Cruising speed: 16 kn

Range at cruising speed: 7,000 nm @ 14 kn

Hull material: Steel

Superstructure material: Aluminum

Fuel capacity: 61,933 U.S. gal (234,455 L)

Freshwater capacity: 29,115 U.S. gal (110,213 L)

Engines: 2x 2,750-hp Cat 3606 Transmission: 2x KaMeWa Ulstein 480AGHC

Propellers: 2x KaMeWa Generators: 3x 500-kW Cat 3412, 1x Cat 3406

AC: Heinen & Hopman/Carrier

Watermakers: 2x TEMAK © 10,567 U.S. gal (40,000 LI per day)

Stabilizers: Fincantieri retractable NSRO 0-26

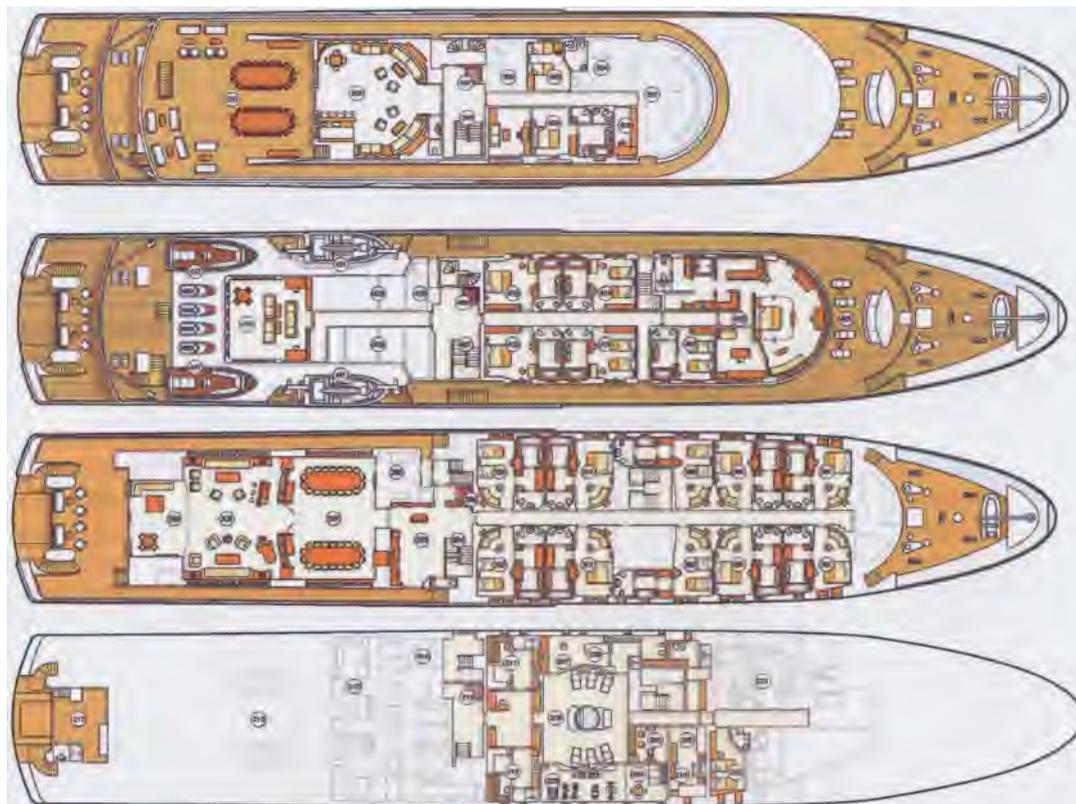
Bow thruster: KaMeWa Tunnel Thruster, 300 kW

Tenders: 2x 25' (7.62 m) Special Craft w/230-hp Volvo inboards; 12'6" (3.81 m) RIB w/35-hp outboard; 2x 7.7 m (25'3"), 27-person Fassmer lifeboats w/Saab Iveco 370-hp inboards

Security system: CCTV plus underwater surveillance and detection

Radar: 2x ARPA

Electronic chart plotter: 2x Ectis Satcom: Sea Tel Fleet 77





Alysia's aft open-air dining area can handle a crowd and still provide a view. This inviting Jacuzzi, right, shares the sun deck with the helipad's lounge area.

from crew service agencies but from the hospitality industry or naval service. Between the two yachts, each 34-member crew is a United Nations microcosm, with staff from Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, China, India, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, England and the Philippines. The official shipboard language, however, is English.

Building to SOLAS classification does have an impact on the yachts; some of it is noticeable—such as the prominent signage for evacuation routes and the number of steel fire doors. But many of the standards are met through means invisible to clients, such as fireproof or fire-retardant coatings on surfaces and silk fabrics. Other elements are built in, such as structures between floors and behind walls designed to make the vessels as safe as possible in any calamity, while other SOLAS standards pertain to the rules for operation of the vessel by her crew.

"Yes, you may notice a safety sign for the first day you are on board—you are supposed to—then you tuck it away in your subconscious and all you see is a beautiful yacht," says Liveras, walking down one of the yacht's many wide corridors. "This is the future of yachting."

We would be hard-pressed to disagree. □

