





A WALK IN THE PARK WITH TIM HEYWOOD

YACHT DESIGNER TIM HEYWOOD AND BURGESS CEO JONATHAN BECKETT GO BACK A LONG WAY, WITH A TRACK RECORD OF COLLABORATION ON MORE THAN A DOZEN GROUND-BREAKING SUPERYACHTS. [MARTIN REDMAYNE](#) JOINED THEM IN THE COUNTRY FOR A CHAT ABOUT PORK PIES, DUTCH BARGES AND MUTUALLY INTERESTING CLIENTS WITH A PENCHANT FOR BEIGE.

A four hour northerly drive (thanks to an insistent SatNav system that wanted us to see the heart of the UK) from London, with Jonathan Beckett, CEO of Burgess gave me a rare insight into the busy lifestyle of a serious broker. But that was not the purpose of the journey. We were en route to the tiny county of Rutland and more specifically Burley House, whose East Wing is home to the world-renowned yacht designer, Tim Heywood and his long-standing partner Vanessa Reville.

A relaxed lunch of local pork pie and a walk in the estate grounds were the order of the day, and a rare escape from the hectic city lives Jonathan and I lead. Tim and Vanessa seem enviably lucky in their quest for the perfect life, almost as far from the sea as you can get on mainland Britain, and what feels a million miles from the non-stop brokerage world of New York, Monaco and London.

creative apprenticeship

Having spent 23 years at the studio of Jon Bannenberg, working for the master of yacht design, Tim Heywood flew the creative nest in 1996 and has quickly grown into one of the leading names in yacht design. He is responsible for the design of some of the most famous yachts afloat: Pelorus, Limitless, Ice, Cakewalk, Siran, to name just a handful. Several of his masterpieces have been completed in conjunction with Jonathan Beckett and the wider Burgess brokerage and technical services team, including the 133 metre Al Mirqab. This winner of 'Motor Yacht of the Year' at the 2009 World Superyacht Awards was a Burgess new build project designed by Tim, with an interior by Andrew Winch. Another recent Heywood-Burgess collaboration is the exciting 62.5 metre Baton Rouge, and there are some very exciting projects in the pipeline.

Back in the early 1990's, Jon Bannenberg was exploring new ventures by investing in the Oceanfast shipyard, something that didn't seem to fit with Tim's idea of what a designer should get involved with, so an amicable departure ensued. Tim left with the Mazda sports car that Jon had given him and the faithful Apple computer that had been his latest toy at the Chelsea-based studio (he confesses it was mainly used for flying bi-planes in digitally enhanced wars with Dickie, Bannenberg's son).

At a time when superyachts were getting bigger and more complicated, Tim's decision to go solo, fully supported and guided by Vanessa, made sense. Limitless, a 96 metre Lürssen and one of the biggest and most high profile new builds at the time, was under Tim's control and after departing the safety of Jon's creative net, he was entrusted by Jon to finish the project. Working under his own designer brand of Tim Heywood Design on certain areas of the yacht - namely the crew accommodation and the bridge - seemed to influence Tim in his choice of focus. From then on, Tim made a clear cut choice to draw the exterior lines and styles of the myriad projects that bear the THD hallmark.

creative freedom

As a renowned exterior designer, Tim has spent the past fourteen years creating the spectacular curves and angles that enclose and define the wide spectrum of living spaces styled by others. An odd decision? The interior world receives more accolades and attention, and some would say that it is where the money is, but over our convivial lunch, Jonathan and Tim spoke about clients who demanded this and that, or would make innumerable detailed changes to the design of their living quarters. This is the client's prerogative, after all. By contrast, if the exterior look and feel was good, then Tim would invariably get the go ahead and be able start work on the 500-600 drawings that each project required.

Tim also added that to do interiors really well and deliver what a client needs would require a large team to bring all of the details and elements to the project, and this would just get in the way of what he likes doing best. Namely, taking a clean piece of white paper and a few well-honed pencils and drawing with effortless ease the latest floating luxury lifestyle cocoon.

He once tried taking on an up-and-coming student who seemed to fit the bill, but soon found that in the time it took to instruct and teach his potential protégé, he could have done the task himself. This is perhaps a reflection of his creative spirit as, supported by Vanessa's unstinting patience, he still works every hour the sun shines over the stunning landscape that surrounds their workplace and home, to deliver the acres of paper with his graphite visions. »



Having spent many years in his Thames riverside studio and apartment in Wapping, this remarkable new home makes this intense designer lifestyle easier for Vanessa, and Jonathan and I both agreed that the decision to escape from the grey and glass landscape of the city, to the green and pleasant land in the heart of Britain, seems to have mellowed Tim. They both enjoy the trappings of their creative success with a stunning garden and wild landscapes, exploring with wellington boots and walking sticks. All of this new country lifestyle seems a far cry from slip-on deck shoes, mobile phones and the obligatory designer sunglasses that seem to be the tools of the yachting trade.

creative partnership

Our day in the country seemed to bring out the boy in both men, who have been friends for years and have pretty much grown up together over three rollercoaster decades of yachting. With no mobile phone signal to speak of outside of the house, it was a rare moment for the two men to kick back and breathe in the fresh air that now fills Tim's head with clear thoughts. The conversation flowed from Burgess team skiing trips with broken broker noses, damp barge trips in Holland with decaying sou'westers, and banquets in Riyadh that would give any normal man indigestion.

Remembering their humble beginnings in this rarefied atmosphere of Tim's country pile seemed to make both of them feel good about their lives. As the afternoon drew to a close, Jonathan and I were all too reluctant to leave the space and pace that now inspires Tim and Vanessa on their quest for new and exciting exteriors. This is what the two of them have turned into an art form, and even during our conversations in Tim's stunning lower ground floor studio, his hands couldn't stop creating. He casually swished pencil over paper, conjuring a personal outline of what, perhaps, may be a new Burgess yacht one day.

