

Q&A With Bannenberg & Rowell Designs, Dickie Bannenberg

Jon Bannenberg founded the modern yacht design business in the 1960s and sadly passed away in 2002. His passion for design was passed down to his son, Dickie Bannenberg who now manages *Bannenberg & Rowell* with his creative director Simon Rowell. We got the chance to catch up with Dickie, and discuss the Superyacht design company founded by his father:



Your father, Jon, was the founder of *Jon Bannenberg Designs Ltd*. Did your passion

for yacht design come from him?

I guess I did get it from him, via osmosis. As a kid, I have strong memories of seeing my Dad come back from the studio and then be at his drawing board at home until late at night. He'd be working on big plans, all hand-drawn, with soft pencils, erasers, and stencils. I would often go to shipyards with him for launches. He'd have clients to dinner often (not something that really happens these days). His clothes would smell of aeroplanes.

What challenges have you faced following in such big footsteps?

They are big footsteps and I don't try and follow them exactly – partly because they are impossible to follow (!) and also as I am not an out and out designer like my father. The Bannenberg name, of course, is a famous one in the yacht industry so it perhaps helps open some doors that were previously shut. But it's also a lot to live up to.

What was the most memorable project delivered by your father?

Well, that's like picking a favourite child and I think most people would agree he design dozens of groundbreaking yachts so I'm not going to pick one!

What unique challenges do you often face when designing a superyacht compared with designing a land residence?

There are many overlaps with land-based projects but, of course, some very particular requirements for yacht design and construction. Some are regulatory – regulations imposed by Classification Societies and the Flag States. Depending on the type of yacht, there can be weight restrictions. Above all,

you are working within quite a restricted envelope – even on large yachts – in terms of the sheer number of systems and technical equipment that has to be incorporated. A deckhead void, for example, has to swallow a/c ducting, cable trays, insulation, fire control systems, and much more. That's before the placement of light fittings, speakers, and many other items.

Bannenberg and Rowell Design has worked with some extremely reputable superyacht builders. Who do you most enjoy working with and why?

I am going to play the favourite child card again! What is true is that certain yards are a better match for different new build projects. It can be as fundamental as having the physical space to construct a project of, say, 80 metres. Or it could be a question of propulsion expertise. Then there is the contrast between semi-custom new builds and something completely bespoke. We've worked with almost all of the Northern European yards, leading Italian ones and others in the US, Spain, and Turkey.

Where and how do you get inspiration for your Bannenberg and Rowell designs?

We have a slightly magpie-like mindset, by which I mean scavenging (sorry – drawing inspiration from) worlds as diverse as architecture, car design, graphic design, contemporary culture, and elsewhere. Curious minds are encouraged in the studio.

<http://www.instagram.com/p/CW5obansRa-/>

How do you recruit for such a unique skillset when finding new design team members?

Our Bannenberg and Rowell team includes designers from hotel and residential backgrounds, a naval architect, an ex-ballet dancer, and a digital modeler from industrial design practice. By and large, everyone is involved in all the current studio projects. The team is adaptable, committed, and cares about presentation. Although design work is increasingly digital, hand-drawing skills are greatly valued and important. So – the recruitment recipe....

What project are you most proud of to date?

Rather than choose the project of which we are most proud, I am going to highlight the [72m Feadship JOY](#), which was our first exterior of the “second Bannenberg era” if I may tag Bannenberg & Rowell like that. She was delivered in 2016, was a multi-award-winning yacht, and has a phenomenally successful record as a charter yacht.

Lastly, What has been the most challenging project for Bannenberg and Rowell to date?

As my father used to say – “The next one”

BANNENBERG ROWELL DESIGN

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