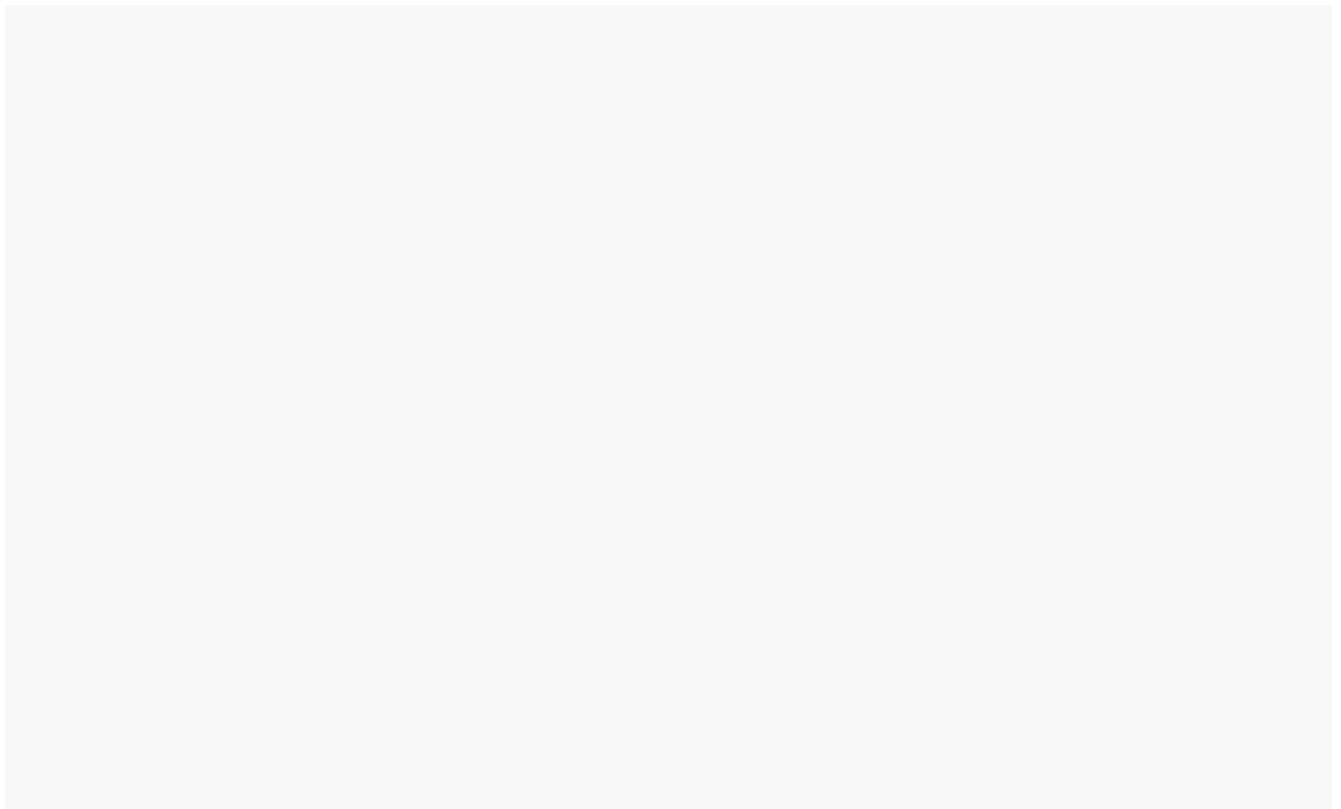


# The total destruction of Saddam Hussein's yacht

At Superyacht Content we are always on the look-out for interesting and alternative yachting stories. So, when the story of AL MANSUR came to our attention courtesy of Jim Evans at [Superyachts Monaco](#) on Instagram, we just had to find out more!



A post shared by Jim Evans (@jimevans2010) on Jul 14, 2017 at 11:42pm PDT

## Saddam Hussein's yacht: AL MANSUR

AL MANSUR translates roughly into English as 'the Victor', which seems somewhat ironic judging by the nasty end it met during the Invasion of Iraq in 2003 at the hands of some rather cruel US Air Force pilots (though, obviously, not as cruel as the yacht's owner- a world famous dictator).

The name originally belonged to an ancient Iraqi Caliph, who was responsible for the complete obliteration of the Omayyad dynasty in the year 715. This founding father of the Iraqi regime made Baghdad his capital, and undoubtedly was a role model to a young Saddam Hussein during his destructive dictatorship over the Iraqi people.



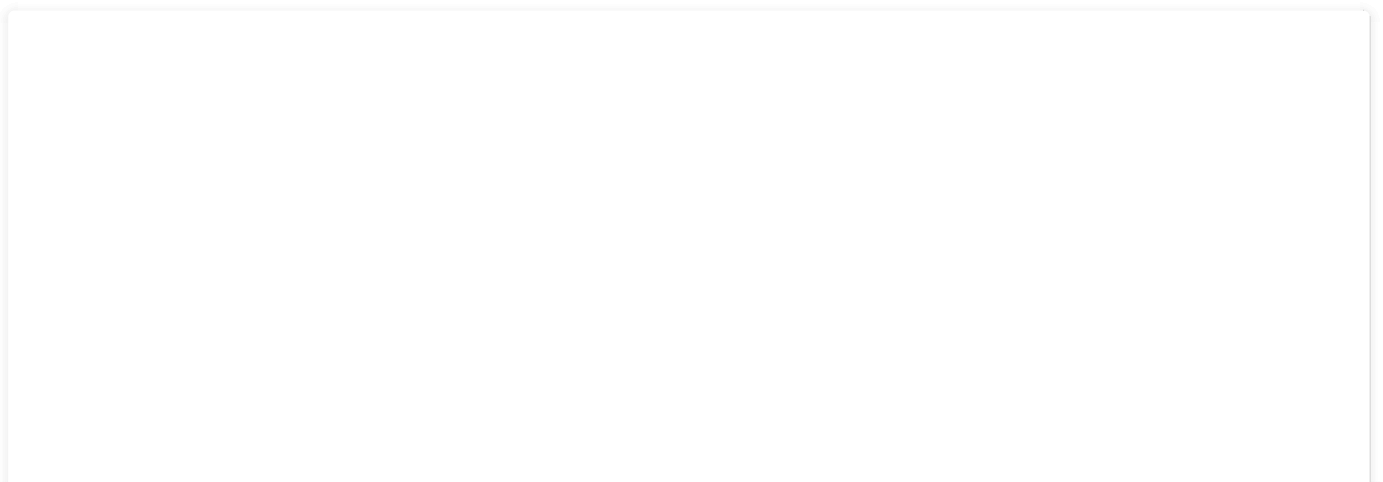
Image Source: KnudEHansen.com

## A Presidential Interior

Originally built in Finland by Wartsila in 1982 AL MANSUR had quite the grandiose air about her, as you would expect for a £25m yacht with her unique position in world affairs.

[Designed by Knud E Hansen in Denmark](#) and littered with trimmings of solid-gold both inside and out, yacht AL MANSUR measured 120m and featured an impressive atrium complete with a glass dome looking up to the sky above. Reportedly she was specified and delivered to Saddam's personal requirements, which included the finest in marble, exotic woods, and precious metal fittings.

Last of all, a secret escape route directly from the master cabin leading to a submarine pool allowed the great dictator to vacate the yacht quickly in the event of hostile boarding by a US Navy SEAL team.



A post shared by Edward Thomas (@edi608) on Aug 2, 2017 at 3:50am PDT

## Going out with a Bang...

So what happened to her? Well, during preparations for the pending US invasion in 2003 Saddam decided to move his beloved yacht to the relative safety of Basrah, where she would supposedly be granted better protection under the watch of the Republican Guard.

This, however, was not enough to stop the US/UK Combined Air Operations Command Centre who (according to [The Aviationist blog](#)) had intercepted Iraqi military radio traffic coming from equipment on board AL MANSUR.

You can probably guess what happened next, but just in case you can't, take a look at the photo below before reading on.



Yep, that's a US Air Force F-14A Tomcat warplane, fitted with 2 powerful 500lb Mk 82 slick bombs primed to detonate on immediate impact with a target.

Two of these jets, which featured in the iconic Top-Gun movie, were able to inflict significant damage on AL MANSUR within a matter of seconds, following the tip off from a British military forward command post. Flown by expert Air Force pilots Lt Mark Callari and Lt Jeff Sims, the bombs they released did most of their damage to the yacht's hull just above the waterline, even though they exploded before hitting the vessel.

The two fighter pilots returned to USS Constellation in the Gulf, leaving the presidential yacht burning brightly in the water. Way to go Goose!



## An unexpected Legacy

Interestingly, this was not the Iraqi Dictator's only yacht. AL MANSUR had a sister ship named QADISSIYAT SADDAM which spent most of its time in the Mediterranean and was often spotted in port in Nice until it was towed away by the State of Iraq in 2010, following a long legal battle over her ownership. The yacht is now known as BASRAH BREEZE and [serves the Iraqi government as a research vessel collecting data on marine science](#).



BASRAH BREEZE: image via Megayachtnews.com