

MARTINEZ STUDIO



Above: *Tulip* is the largest project yet for aluminium specialists K&M. From left: owner Melle Boersma steers then shows off the push-button helm seats that rotate to form a flush deck

“ Designer Mani Frers describes her as a ‘high-performance yacht with a classic flair... a timeless design that combines simplicity and efficiency’ ”

Modern-classics are the new normal as reported in our story on the Superyacht Cup. Yet it is rare to see one that is so inspired by traditional but so cutting-edge. The plumb stem, counter stern and pilothouse look has been masterfully reinvented over recent years, notably by Dutch architects like Dijkstra and Hoek. But aboard *Tulip* this has been taken to a more modern level. The ice-blue pilothouse stands out against the particularly flush deck, with long tinted windows surrounding the structure.

Combine that with her matching-coloured carbon rig, dark metallic-brown paintwork, flat underbody and lifting T-keel and the result is a highly on-trend boat. Sheer, swept decks and counter provide some softer retro juxtaposition, together with Frers' indulgent beam and trademark large single wheel. Designer Mani Frers describes *Tulip* as “a high-performance yacht with a classic flair... a timeless design that combines simplicity and efficiency”.

While her shape may stem from South America, the rest of the boat is as Dutch as her name, even down to her owners, builders and interior designers. “I wanted beauty before performance,” says her owner Melle Boersma, who runs Leonardo Yachts with his brother, producing the striking Eagle daysailers (mini J lookalikes), so appreciates a pretty hull shape. “All boats have compromises – we know *Tulip*'s isn't the quickest shape or the most practical for storage, but we love the look.”

“We wanted to start from scratch and didn't want to be too pilot classic-based”, Boersma told me as we motored out to the startline, explaining four designers were consulted but how they really clicked with Frers. “We thought he'd be interesting because he does mainly modern designs, so we thought he'd come up with lots of ideas.”

Indeed. As well as *Tulip*'s edgy look, Mani Frers came up with the ingenious idea of adjustable seats all around the wheel that can be tilted to

offer the optimum angle for cruising, or rotated inwards (electric hydraulic) to hide away for a flush deck when racing. Clear screens also rise out of the coamings at the push of a button to give the cockpit protection from the wind. The deck is fastidiously clean and many features are cleverly hidden, both on or under deck and in the interior.

“The cockpit benches are really long and wide as we Dutch are tall and wanted to enjoy being outside,” says Boersma's partner Alicia van Vliissingen. One large cockpit rather than a separate guest's cockpit reveals the owners' wish for a boat that they can actively sail with friends. They are also considering chartering out *Tulip* and “hope [she] will attract people who really want to sail”.

What's in a name?

“We wanted a logo that was easy to see and short,” Boersma explains. And as the owners originally intended to sail under a British flag they wanted to keep the Dutch connection. “*Tulip* seemed appropriate and nice.”

And she isn't black. The owners wanted a dark, dark metallic brown from the beginning, confirmed when they first saw *Lady B*. From first thoughts about the design to the launch was a four-year process – including selecting the designers – and she was 18 months in build, with the owners very hands-on throughout. They will mostly cruise with the boat and keep a berth in Palma. The idea is for some seasons in the Med and Caribbean, then a five-year plan for Pacific cruising.

Boersma had always been a racing sailor, though, and Palma was *Tulip*'s first regatta, a litmus test to decide if he would race her occasionally as was planned. Builders K&M gave her a lightweight construction for this purpose, aluminium throughout with sandwich bulkheads. She also sports a high modulus Hall carbon rig to keep weight centered and down to around 50 tonnes, while a lifting keel helps her point upwind and gives her a variable draught from 3.20-5.10m.





Left: the raised saloon is big and bright, with plenty of natural light and views through the pilothouse windows. Above: the galley and mess area are aft, with guest accommodation and a suitably plush owner's cabin forward (below)



A family affair

It was a pleasure to be in the Superyacht Cup racing in a Corinthian spirit, with the owner's wife, father, brother and friends as crew. Onboard were two Maltese friends with whom Boersma has done the Middle Sea Race seven times on their heavily modified IRC 40, plus his J/22 crewmate.

Despite being one of the smallest competitors, we were handicapped as the fastest in class and it was a job to claw through our fleet. The speeds I saw that day were more modest than lively, averaging 8.5-9 knots upwind, 9-9.5 knots downwind under gennaker and topping at 10 beam reaching with the code 1 in a Force 4. However, her polars suggest speeds up to a knot faster. The North Sails wardrobe includes working sails in a 3DL cruising laminate, with a partially battened main stowing into a wing boom, blade jib, plus a big black tulip-embazoned gennaker and a furling Code 1 which can be flaked into a bag in the sail locker.

Tulip is designed to be easily handled by two crew (aft) – her large flush foredeck makes it easy to work – while her deck layout and sheet leads are extremely neat. Examples include a hydraulically rotating anchor arm that stows forward of the large sail locker, and jib sheets that disappear under deck and reappear a metre before the primaries. *Tulip* is very much a modern boat on deck with a retro superstructure.

But in port alongside the iconic ketch *Rebecca*, I was reminded of her timeless Frers features, especially their matching enormous wheels, their lower radius disappearing into a trench, and superb beamy hulls.

"Interiors tend to be very classic or very minimalist," said Alicia van Vlissingen. *Tulip* continues what she does on the outside and combines both, but with a heavy contemporary slant. Dutch company Sinot Yacht Design designed the interior, again with close involvement by the owners. Colours are bold, with brown and tomato orange dominating, while dark palisander wood contrasts with light smoked oak soles.

Tulip is set up to sail with six guests and two crew, as the owners mainly sail with friends or family. These areas are well separated with guest accommodation all forward, and the galley, mess, engine room and crew cabin aft of the raised saloon. The saloon is a leisure area with a card table, TV and library zones, plus a small chart table forward. The main feature is a zebano wood table that lifts up, down, in and out electronically. The huge, slightly curved pilothouse windows provide good views and

'sun-roof' glazing over the entire central length ensures that the dark wood doesn't seem to shrink the space.

"I wanted it to be cosy but not overdone; peaceful and calm," Alicia van Vlissingen explains. "I didn't want the boat to look sterile." So, there is extensive use of natural products, including leather soles and leather upholstered trim around doors and drawers. Bulkheads (honeycomb for weight and insulation) are lined with oak and details such as coves and borders are made of dark rosewood.

The guest accommodation is all forward of the saloon, with each cabin having its own heads and separate shower, complete with red marble soles. A forward master cabin was chosen as the owners frequently berth stern-to and didn't want crew stamping over their heads. Due to her sheerline, the headroom increases in here to create a very spacious cabin. A vast closet is built-in aft, a clever solution that I failed to even notice due to curved doors which blend into the bulkhead. "I was very persistent that all cabins have proper closets, so guests can hang clothes, plus drawers under berths, so you don't feel like you're travelling," van Vlissingen explains.

Crew berths and galley

The guest cabins, split by the corridor and lifting keel box, also have clever occasional Pullman berths that stow into the deckhead to preserve the hull window views. The crew area was a challenge because the owners wanted as large a cockpit as possible, which deprives the central mess and engine room entrance of standing headroom, so crew have to duck between the galley and crew cabin. However, the galley area has a large hull window by the stove and plentiful work surface (although general stores stowage is rather limited and with no bilge space the lazarette will be an impractical solution for ocean crossings).

Tulip proved a very quiet boat to be aboard. She is the biggest project for K&M Yachtbuilders to date and illustrates, says shipyard owner Eeuwe Kooi, that "K&M is able not only to build pure aluminium no-nonsense ships but also luxury cruisers".

After a summer cruising the Med, her owners plan to sail across to the Caribbean. "An offshore race like the RORC 600 might be interesting," the owner says with a twinkle in his eye.

SW