

NEW MOON



A Chicago businessman finally builds the boat of his dreams—and loads it with advanced technology.

IT'S PERFECTLY FINE IF GUESTS CHOOSE TO CALL THE luxurious 198-foot *Blue Moon III* a yacht, but owner Richard Duchossois prefers to call it a boat. "I guess I'm not that yachty," says the down-to-earth 85-year-old founder of Chicago's Duchossois Industries and chairman of the famed Arlington Park racetrack. "I just love the water and like to relax on it. When I call it a 'yacht,' it looks like I'm trying to show off or something. If I'm saying a 'boat,' a lot of people have boats."

BY LOUISE FARR PHOTOGRAPHY BY DON KRESKI



Well, yes. But most people don't own boats like this—a streamlined, steel-hulled wonder that's comfortably elegant everywhere both inside and out. "I was looking for an attractive yacht that was classical but still modern," says Richard, who enjoys cruising around Chicago's lakes in summertime. "And I wanted every convenience I could possibly have."

Richard got exactly what he wanted: a five-deck beauty with a master stateroom, five guest cabins, two salons (or "saloons," says the always unpretentious businessman), a library, bar, dining room, and glassed-in bridge deck that allows maximum observation while shielding guests from inclement weather (the deck also opens up to allow guests to enjoy the ocean breeze). All of these spaces surround a dramatic, tubular glass elevator. "I didn't want one where you go in like a closet," Richard says.

The dream of owning his own boat began while racing sailboats as a youngster. He gave up that dream when he went to work after World War II to support his family. For years Richard, who describes himself modestly as "just a businessman," was so busy building what became his family's \$2 billion industrial empire that sailing remained a fantasy. Finally in 1995, he decided to charter a yacht to see if boating lived up to his expectations. By the time that two-week Caribbean trip came to a close, Richard and the captain were shopping for a vessel. "There was something about the water, being out there without all the hubbub of everything," he says. "After the second or third day you forget you have an office."

The first *Blue Moon* came by its name while Richard was reminiscing about the eponymous song while standing on the bridge deck one night. The name stuck through *Blue Moon II*, a custom 165-footer that he commissioned with Feadship, a yacht builder in the Netherlands. British yacht designer Donald Starkey remembers that as soon as *Blue Moon II*—the first major yacht in the world to be delivered in the millennium—was finished, Richard said, "I can't wait to get on with the next one."

Soon he was craving a longer, sleeker boat equipped with the newest technology. So he went back to the drawing board with Starkey, Feadship, and De Voogt Naval Architects, also in the Netherlands. "He enjoyed the whole process," says Starkey. The boat designer visited Chicago half a dozen times to confer with Richard and his wife, Judi, who visited the Netherlands several times to inspect the boat's construction before *Blue Moon III* was delivered in June 2005.

BESIDES HIS YEARNING FOR HIGH-TECH GADGETS, Richard also wanted to avoid feeling baffled when trying to use

Blue Moon III is moored in Chicago, where the owners use it in the summer for fun, but never for business entertaining. "We have to have it so it's comfortable. If you want to be barefooted, you can barbecue up on the sundeck," Richard says. All of the main living spaces of the yacht boast big-screen TVs, as shown in the main salon (top).





"We've simplified all the complicated behind-the-scenes things about it so the owner and his guests can have a pleasant experience."

—Mark Stoldt,
custom installer



the gear. "I'm not tech-savvy. I wanted to make sure that even I could understand it," he says. He brought in Texas-based AMX, a subsidiary of Duchossois Industries, to handle the elaborate installation, which includes a Lutron HomeWorks lighting system and Silhouette blinds; three separate DirecTV satellite receivers for travel in Europe, the Caribbean, and North America; 12 Fujitsu plasma televisions; and 16 LCD screens for crew members. "They're every place you go," Richard says about the flat-screen TVs. "But we hide most of them. In the main saloon and the boat deck saloon, they're in the ceiling. [For] some, a little painting will come up and hide the TV."

The captain, first mate, or engineer can control any piece of equipment on the boat from the AMX touchscreen located in one of six equipment racks, which are housed in cabinets on the bridge. Should a techno-glitch occur, the system notifies AMX via e-mail. "We can log into the system and do diagnostics remotely," says Mark Stoldt, AMX vice president of professional services.

So far, to the owner's delight, nothing has gone wrong. "Often-times, we have guests on board who aren't techies, and the crew doesn't have to spend time showing them how to work things," Richard says. "If somebody wants to go to their stateroom and listen to music or watch a movie, they don't have to go through a long, frustrating procedure trying to find out how to do it."

In the main salon, when the Duchossoises or guests are not enjoying the view of a skyscraper or the intense blue waters of their favorite Caribbean destinations, they can watch the drop-down 63-inch Fujitsu plasma TV from the comfort of a cream and taupe sofa or the scallop-back chairs designed by Holly Hunt. The bridge salon has a more casual family-room atmosphere, with chairs that can swivel to take in the view.

"It has a dressy feeling at times, but it's very welcoming," says Robin Waterman, owner of Lee Perot Design in Barrington, Ill., about the boat. This rendition is a design departure from the previous yachts, which displayed more of a nautical flair—a style Judi wanted to avoid the third time around.

"So many of the boats we see—and our first two were that way to a degree—look beautiful in pictures, but they aren't practical when you have a group of people," Richard says. "You like to have areas where you can all sit together, have drinks together, enjoy conversation. We tried to build a nice boat, but not so sumptuous that people were afraid to sit down."

To lend a sense of drama, the master stateroom is entered from behind either side of the built-in upholstered headboard that doubles as a wall. The suite is equipped with a 50-inch Fujitsu plasma TV. Of course, the ocean views glimpsed from the chaise, also by Holly Hunt, may prove more relaxing than the 6 p.m. news

The master bath (top) reveals a glimpse of Judi's dressing room. When the plasma TV isn't in use in the bedroom, a simple touch of a button on the AMX touchscreen (left) conceals the screen with an oil painting that was commissioned by the owner. "One thing we don't particularly like is TV screens all over the place," Richard says.

TECH TALK: BLUE MOON III

What's the biggest challenge with custom installation on a yacht, as compared to a home? Mark Stoldt, vice president of professional services for AMX, sums it up in one word: "Space."

"That's exactly the right answer," says Ian Child, a principal engineer for custom installation firm Wall of Sound in York, England. "Space is so much more of a premium, and all of the wires have to be in when the yacht leaves the yard, so running a cable from one place to another is pretty much impossible once you've got the panels in."

But Child and his team didn't have time to worry about running cables from one end of the yacht to the other; they had their hands full simply connecting the six equipment racks' worth of gear in the bridge. "We ended up with 4,000 meters of cable in the rack area alone," Child says. "When we had 3,000 meters of cable in and still had lots left to do, we thought, 'Is there something in the back of this rack eating the cable?' At one point, we ran the whole of Europe out of the labels we were using. We sort of had to stop labeling things for a week until the labels started coming back in."

Adding to the number of wires required by the project were the problems associated with the sort of wireless technologies normally used in control systems. "There are so many RF systems on a yacht, and it's even worse in a harbor because every yacht has the same set of big RF systems running. We did a test on an RF scanner in one of the harbors we were in and it came up with more than 120 access points in range," Child says. "Because of that, we couldn't rely too heavily on wireless networks for the main control systems, as we would in a home environment. It would be fine if the yacht was always off on its own in the middle of nowhere, but when you pull into Monaco and there's another hundred super-yachts there, you run into a sort of wireless traffic jam."

Stoldt reveals that future upgrades to the control system may provide a solution to the wireless problem, though. "One thing we're testing right now on the *Blue Moon III* is our latest wireless technology, which is on the

RESOURCES

Boat Builder: Feadship of the Netherlands (feadship.nl, +31.23.524.7000)

Custom Installers: AMX of Richardson, Texas (800.222.0193, amx.com) and Wall of Sound of York, England (+44.01430.861271, wallsof-sound.co.uk)

Interior Designer: Lee Perot Design of Barrington, Ill. (847.382.0617)

Naval Architect: De Voogt Naval Architects of the Netherlands (devoogtnavalarchitects.com, +31.23.524.7000)


Yacht Designer: Donald Starkey Designs of Middlesex, U.K. (+44.208.569.9921, dsdyachts.co.uk)

ZigBee protocol," he says. ZigBee, a wireless protocol similar to the better-known Z-Wave, works at lower data rates and on different frequencies than typical WiFi networks. "The captain has one of our new Mio Modero R-4 handheld remotes and our plan is to deploy 10 of those throughout the boat," Stoldt says. "We are hoping that with that frequency, using that protocol, we'll have less interference due to the conglomeration of access points in port." For an equipment list, visit hemagazine.com. —Dennis Burger

broadcast from home, which arrives via satellite television.

Luckily, the Duchossoises believe in taking care of their guests and crew as well as they take care of themselves. Crew members enjoy LCD screens at the foot of their bunks, with additional 42-inch plasma TVs in the crew mess room and the crew lounge, the guest quarters and exercise room, and the captain's quarters. "All the guest rooms have the same look, same feel, same technology as the master suite," says Stoldt. "If a guest asks Mr. D. how to do something, he certainly can tell them, 'Push this button! Do that!'" When selecting touchscreens, Stoldt also took Richard's age into consideration. "We wanted to have a nice, bright interface with some fairly good-sized icons to make it easier for him to see," he says.

Throughout the boat, light contrasts with rich, dark woods in a creamy color scheme that Judi chose. Interior designer Waterman—working on her first boat interior—made numerous trips to Chicago's Merchandise Mart with Judi during the 13 months she and design associate Leah Gray were allotted to complete the interiors.

The only disappointment to Richard is how little time he has to spend on the boat with his family: These days, he's lucky if he can grab a week or two here and there. "I think about it a lot," he says. But the "regular guy" who refuses to call himself an entrepreneur is not about to slow down. "Anyone who hasn't had an experience on a boat like that ought to charter one and just try it," he says. "Once you're hooked on it, you're hooked." For a full list of interior resources, please visit our website at hemagazine.com. 

"The physical aspects of an installation should not be underestimated," says Child. "At sea, the waves can be equivalent to a substantial earthquake so everything must be held tight to keep things working reliably."

"Although the sound systems are designed for quality and subtlety, the vessel can 'rock' if required. With more than 12,000 watts of power from the amplifiers, she can embarrass the 'party' boats."

—Ian Child,
custom installer

