BURGER’S BIG BOAT

153’ Ingot

The new 153’ Ingot is Burger Boat’s largest launch ever; this elegant and sophisticated yacht is sure to become the proud new flagship for this custom builder.

Story Cecile Gauert Photos Neil Rabinowitz
INGOT IS BURGER BOAT’S largest and most complex project to launch since the historic U.S. boat builder reopened in 1993 to focus on the construction of custom aluminum yachts from 90'. Today about 31 Burger yachts, each with its own character and style, cruise the world’s waterways. With the launch of vessels such as the 144’ Miragab V, a 2006 World Yachts Trophy winner, Burger Boat has established a reputation as a builder ready to tackle unique projects. Although this year the yard completed two identical yachts (Areti I and Areti II) belonging to one owner who divides his time between the U.S. and Europe, Burger’s business model is to build custom yachts.

Jim Ruffulo, Burger Boat’s president, acknowledges this is not always the easiest avenue for a shipyard to follow, especially given today’s quickly rising costs. Custom building, however, is what Burger knows best. “There are not that many options in the U.S. for a yard that builds custom yachts,” he says, “and we believe there is a market for fully custom yachts.”

Ingot took longer than expected to complete, but the company grew from the experience; it has implemented a “lean culture,” empowering workers to adopt ways to cut waste. New procedures and methods are in place, and the long months of work have produced a real showcase piece for the Burger craftsmen.

The intricate and classic woodwork on Ingot is remarkable, from a custom-made mahogany desk in the owners’ suite to book-matched Honduras mahogany panels and 104 columns in mahogany and maple burl. The Dutch firm Vripack worked with Burger’s design team on the yacht’s...
The intricate wood work was done at the shipyard based on a design by Vripack.
The flybridge and bridge deck provide guests with outstanding views.

The elegant neo-classical interior, but all the intricate work was done in Burger's home town of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The shipyard’s joinery department, located in this industrial Midwestern town that recently attracted the attention of The Wall Street Journal, is a carpenter’s dream. Full-size logs, carefully sawn and labeled, provide the raw material, readily available near the entrance of the two-year-old building. There is mahogany, birch, teak and other rare wood stock all ready for the choosing. Stacks of veneers, their borders fringed like pages of an aged manuscript, wait for their turn to embellish panels for other projects currently underway, including Sycara, a yacht inspired by classic steamships, scheduled for a spring 2009 launch.

For the past four years the yard has pursued a policy of capital improvement, and the fatigued and drafty building that used to house the carpenters is no more. Recently-installed computerized equipment helps make carpentry work both more precise and quicker. The shipyard also has implemented modular building methods for its custom interiors. Components are now completely prepped and finished before they make their journey, as so many puzzle pieces, on truck beds to waiting hulls located a few hundred yards away in the modern bays of the Burger Boat Company.

The company has been in nearly continuous operation for about 145 years and is considered one of the pillars of the Manitowoc economy. It is an often-told story that when one of the shipyard’s former owners years ago tried to move the business to sunny Florida, almost none of the craftsmen considered the offer to relocate. Burger Boat is a big part of this Great Lakes community, and Burger has benefited from a substantial state grant that is helping finance other improvements currently under way. When I visited last August, workers had started pouring a new concrete slab outside of the existing bays, and future plans included dredging the harbor that fronts the shipyard.

This is where I first saw Ingot, a 153’ trideck, with a gleaming and elegant white hull that lay proudly at its pier. Although hull 503 (as the project was known until recently) changed owners during the course of construction, the shipyard followed the original owner’s brief, which called for redundant systems that would ensure this to be a capable globe-cruising vessel. Just shy of 500 GT, the yacht carries up to 17,000 gallons of fuel and 3,500 gallons of fresh water. Her engines, twin Caterpillar 3508-B diesels, each produce 1,000 bhp at 1,600 rpm. Extensive navigation and safety equipment, including an air horn system from Kahlenberg, from the neighboring lakeside town of Two Rivers, completes an extended list of onboard systems chosen to make this yacht safe and comfortable at sea and dockside.

When I visited, workers were preparing Ingot for a full-day lake trial and her soon-to-follow delivery to her owners. Even with open ceiling panels revealing wiring, and protective tarps over custom carpets, it was
impossible to overlook the yacht’s elegance. Almost as impressive as what you do see—the precise joinery, beautiful veneer, marble soles, genuine mother-of-pearl wall tiles, backlit white onyx with natural brown veining to complement the surrounding mahogany ceilings, an interesting cast-iron banister, sculpted carpets...—is what you don’t see. The onboard elevator is so well concealed behind wooden doors matching surrounding panels, I almost missed it entirely. The after main deck is spacious enough to carry two tenders, and bulkheads open outward to facilitate their launching. Also invisible to the casual glance are the cranes, which are hidden in the ceiling. At the top of the interior stairway that reaches the sundeck is a door equipped with an electric eye; it opens quietly to a well-protected entryway, a glass enclosure sheltered from wind, and spray. From here you make your way forward to the outside helm station, or aft toward the bar, the chaises or the round Jacuzzi surrounded by sun pads. Concealed in a portside compartment, a treadmill slides out effortlessly to create a temporary but panoramic mini gym.

Fairly classic at first glance (a formal dining room, ondeck full-beam master stateroom, lower-deck guest staterooms, bridge deck lounge), this yacht is full of practical ideas that make it user-friendly for both guests and crew. All cabins, for example, have king-sized berths. The well-designed galley includes—in addition to the top-of-the-line appliances you’d expect on a yacht of this caliber—a practical swivel seat and a removable extra marble-topped counter that provides additional prep space. From the galley, stairs lead directly to a pantry, conveniently located aft of the bridge deck bar. The crew area is not only functional and spacious, it is impeccably finished, as is the captain’s suite on the bridge deck.

This project should provide Burger Boat with great footing to move forward with resolve. The next step is expected to be the late summer launch of the 101’ TÔ-KALÔN, with naval architecture by Donald Blount & Associates and Burger, and styling by Cor D. Rover. Next year Sea Owl, a 142’ yacht with an Andrew Winch design and Vripack engineering, and the highly-anticipated Sycara, a collaborative effort among owner, designer Bruce King, Ken Freivokh and the Burger team, should mark other major milestones for the historic shipyard. Further down the line, watch for the Burger Boat design team to get a bit bolder and for some construction in steel.
Vertical windows in the helm station help prevent glare.

**LOA:** 152' 09"  
**Beam (maximum):** 29' 08"  
**Draft (full load):** 7' 06"  
**Gross tonnage:** 499 tons  
**Main engines:** 2 x 1,000 bhp Caterpillar 3508B series II  
**Generator:** 2 x Northern Lights, 130 kW, 60 Hz, 208 V three phase 1,800 rpm.  
**Cruising speed:** 13 knots (Approx.)  
**Maximum speed:** 15 knots (Approx.)  
**Long range cruise:** 11 knots  
**Range:** 2,800 nm @ 13 knots (Approx.)  
**Range at long range cruise:** 4,000 nm @ 11 knots (Approx.)  
**Fuel capacity:** 17,000 U. S. Gal.  
**Fresh water:** 3,000 U. S. Gal.  
**Clean oil capacity:** 180 US Gal.  
**Waste oil capacity:** 175 US Gal.  
**Black water holding capacity:** 650 US Gal.  
**Grey water holding capacity:** 650 US Gal.  

**Navigation and communication equipment:**  
1 Furuno 8800S GMDSS 25W VHF Radio @ Nav desk  
1 Furuno full function remote handset for 8800 VHF @ pilothouse helm station  
1 Furuno 8800S GMDSS 25W VHF Radio @ helm  
1 Furuno full function remote handset for 8800 VHF @ pilothouse helm station  
1 Icom M 602 Black DSC/VHF with antenna @ crew area  
1 Icom M602 Black DSC/VHF with Ram mic & antenna @ sundeck helm station  
2 Pains Wessex SOS 3-CH GMDSS VHF Radio  
2 Pains Wessex lithium (For B4-002) batteries  
1 Furuno FS1570 150W with tuner SSB and antenna  
1 Furuno PPS10 GMDSS printer  
1 Furuno Felcom 15 Inmarsat Sat Com C  
1 C-Plath NAVIGAT-X MK II Gyro-Compass system  
1 C-Plath NAVIPILOT 4000 auto pilot with control and display