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A large blue and white sailboat is shown from a low angle, sailing on a deep blue ocean. The boat has a dark hull and a wooden deck. The sails are a vibrant blue, and the mast is white. A person is visible on the deck near the helm. The sky is clear and blue. The text 'The new CLASSIC' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# The new CLASSIC

*Retro style wedded to modern technology is Andre Hoek's stock in trade,  
and he's done it again with the new Atalante.*

Words - Roger Lean-Vercoe

Photography - Cory Silken, Rick Tomlinson

Everyone loves a design from the “classic” pre-war era, be it a car, aircraft or yacht. Anywhere these machines gather – at Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance, Ocean Reef Vintage Weekend or the international Panerai Classic Yachts regattas – they invariably draw a huge crowd of enthusiastic onlookers.

However, owning such a classic, particularly a large classic yacht, is quite a different matter. Sizeable examples from respected designers in pristine condition are rare and prohibitively expensive to acquire, and the cost of proper care and maintenance is exorbitant. More significantly, their performance and comfort standards often remain locked in a bygone age. They are better, perhaps, to admire rather than possess.

But there is an alternative, in yachting at least: the “Modern Classic,” the type of craft whose visible lines reflect the magnificence of yachts from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On the surface they show the beauty, simple elegance and varnished brightwork of a true vintage. Beneath the waterline, though, a highly efficient, state-of-the-art hull form conceals their modernity, with slimmed-down appendages resulting in excellent performance. Similarly, their interiors provide all the comfort of a modern yacht, as well as totally reliable machinery and equipment.

Designing such boats is not straightforward. Encapsulating the authentic spirit of a classic yacht within a modern craft is an art that only a few contemporary designers have mastered. Pre-eminent among these is Andre Hoek, whose Netherlands-based design studio has specialized in modern classics since its foundation in 1986. Back then, its stock in trade was improving the performance of traditional Lemsteraken – a traditional Dutch fishing vessel now raced by enthusiasts – by using tank-testing and velocity prediction programs to reshape their leeboards, rudders and mast positions. Soon he was designing new Lemsteraken, and such was his success that some 300 of these vessels now have Hoek’s name on them.

By 1988, the studio had developed a completely new semi-production series of yachts, the Truly Classic, inspired by Hoek’s love of boats drawn by famous designers from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as William Fife, Charles Nicholson and Nathanael Herreshoff. “My aim was to combine the best of the classic and current eras, with drop-dead gorgeous looks and a modern hull form to ensure sublime performance,” says Hoek. He started off with a 65-foot

Truly Classic that first proved its pedigree by winning its class in Antigua Classic Week three times in a row. Thirty-three Truly Classics have since followed.

The latest and largest launch in this Truly Classic series is the 127-foot *Atalante*, created for an experienced client who has sailed since childhood. His previous boat, also named *Atalante*, was a smaller 90-foot Truly Classic, launched in 2009 by Claasen Shipyards. Although this yacht seemed immense at the time, the owner liked it so much that he was soon considering a bigger, faster and more spacious replacement, albeit with the same number of guest cabins as the original, but with enlarged crew and service areas.

“The measure of success of this first *Atalante*,” explains her owner, “was that I wanted my new yacht to be built by exactly the same team that had previously delivered such a great outcome” – this team being Nigel Ingram from MCM, acting as the owner’s project manager, and Victor Weerens as Claasen’s project manager.

Although this was from the outset to be another semi-custom Truly Classic series hull, the design-development process was much the same as for a fully custom yacht. Starting out at 115 feet in length, *Atalante* gained another 12-and-a-half feet by increments, which expanded the crew accommodations to allow for five crew in three cabins when chartering, rather than four in two cabins as originally planned. This decision had other benefits in that the “reserve” crew cabin could double as a captain’s office.

Seen on the water, there are few clues that *Atalante* is a brand-new vessel, apart from her glistening perfection. Knowledgeable observers, however, will immediately identify her spars and continuous standing rigging as carbon and her sails as North Sails’ latest 3Di technology, while her fully instrumented steering console set in her aft cockpit is another giveaway. But elsewhere, from the elegant curves of her bow and sheerline, to her teak-laid decks running past low, traditionally shaped teak deckhouses, and her engraved stern, she is the very picture of a classic yacht.

Throughout her design and build, the guiding principle was “keep it simple.” For this reason, the modern fin-and-bulb keel is a fixed draft of less than 15 feet, while on deck, her traditional Park Avenue boom and slab-reefing system show the straightforward thinking that defines her rigging, as do the six large sail winches that border the aft sailing cockpit serving the furling genoa, staysail and gennaker. It is also epitomized in the single captive winch that controls the mainsheet, which, being sheeted from the mast rather than from the boom end, is positioned



*Seen on the water, there are few clues that Atalante is a brand-new vessel, apart from her glistening perfection.*





*Throughout her design and build, the guiding principle was “keep it simple.”*



*The vintage feel of the Truly Classic craft comes in part from the quality joinery and brightwork throughout, as well as the teak-laid decks. Above right: A full-beam lower salon sits just forward of the owner's stateroom.*

*Above: The shaded main cockpit offers a comfortable lounging and dining area.*

*Right: Fitted storage for serving items and cantilevered stools that stow close to the dining table are just a couple of the outstanding details in the upper salon.*





As with the previous *Atalante*, there is an owner-aft, crew-forward arrangement on the lower deck. The lower salon, with a compact bar equipped with a refrigerator and icemaker (inset), serves as a foyer to the owner's cabin.



by the mast's foot. The deck layout is well thought-out, with all the sailing action taking place in the aft cockpit, which has direct access to the aft deckhouse and its comprehensive navigation station. Notably, the single wheel, which operates a totally manual chain-and-wire system to the quadrant, has perfect all-around visibility. Just forward, the main cockpit – well-protected from the elements and shaded beneath a sturdy bimini – offers a completely safe, spacious and supremely comfortable lounging and dining area for those not involved in actually sailing the yacht.

While the interior of this new *Atalante*, also by Hoek, very much reflects the owner's earlier boat, the extra volume permits a much more roomy atmosphere. Claasen's exemplary mahogany joinery and soft furnishings from London-based Hamilton Weston enhance its traditional feel. Down a few steps from the cockpit, the main deckhouse offers excellent visibility from both a seated

or standing position, and much of the same facilities as the cockpit, but within a sheltered and climate-controlled environment. There is superb detailing everywhere, from the impeccable fitted storage for silverware and china, to the dining table's carefully designed cantilevered stools that twist and stow close to the table when not in use, as well as the soft patch beneath the table and its twin in the deckhead that allows for easy removal of larger components from the engine room below.

From the deck salon, stairs fore and aft lead down to the lower deck. Reflecting the arrangement of the earlier *Atalante*, the design-and-build team decided from the outset that an owner-aft, crew-forward layout would best meet the owner's needs. A delightful lower salon is positioned aft of the main salon, an unusual choice since most salons are found forward of the deckhouse. This acts as the social hub of the yacht, offering a large conversation/television area to port and a compact but fully functional bar to starboard, equipped with ample storage, as well as a refrigerator and icemaker.

The salon also serves as a foyer to the master cabin in the stern, or even could be a private sitting room if needed. The master suite itself offers a huge bed flanked by a settee and dressing table, exceptional storage, including

a full-length closet, a shower room and a separate head. Stairs lead up to the aft deckhouse and navigation cockpit, providing both an escape route and access to what might become a private owner's cockpit when the yacht is at anchor.

Forward of the deck salon are two en suite guest cabins, a double to port and a twin to starboard, each with a sizeable portlight. Beyond are the crew quarters, where the standard of joinery and decoration remains unchanged. Captain James Prince and his wife, Kate, who served aboard the earlier *Atalante*, drafted much of this area's layout, creating a large open living space in which the mess table can adjust in height and fold for dining or feet-up relaxing.

Technically, the yacht is as one might expect from Claasen – faultless. Few boats of this size can boast a control room like *Atalante's*, while the engine room itself is laid out in optimal fashion with at least comfortable kneeling headroom in all areas. A pair of 32kW Northern Lights gensets provides power while a single 328kW Scania diesel delivers the propulsion. Notably, her service battery bank, comprising 30kWh of 48V lithium batteries, allows the yacht to run in silent mode for up to eight hours.

On our test day, there is just six knots of wind ruffling the Mediterranean. In this zephyr, she easily accelerates to 5.5 knots on a close fetch, with fingertip control on the

wheel. The captain reports that she has so far achieved a best speed of 13.4 knots on a broad reach, unless you count the 17 knots surfing on a wave off the Portuguese coast.

Her classic hull form, with long overhangs, also means that her motion at sea is gentle, reducing susceptibility to seasickness, while at anchor she is quiet, without any slamming of waves in the stern areas that cause sleeplessness in many modern hulls.

Trimming is straightforward in view of the three ergonomically positioned Lewmar winches, which can be used in either cruising or race mode. Crew can use remote control to operate other hydraulic functions during short-handed sailing.

*Atalante* is equally successful when cruising the oceans with the owner and his family, as she is certain to be during superyacht regattas. As Hoek is keen to point out: "*Atalante* represents the best of both worlds. She performs like a modern thoroughbred and blends this with the timeless appeal of a classic yacht."

Her owner certainly agrees. "On the original *Atalante*, I enjoyed close contact with the water and the ability to spin the boat on a sixpence when racing. I did not want to lose this on the new boat, and Andre has delivered beautifully on both counts." ■



*Her service battery bank allows the yacht to run in silent mode for up to eight hours.*

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## Atalante - Claasen Shipyards

Fresh start:  
Modern carbon rigging  
and the latest  
3Di sail technology  
mark her as a new build.

TC 127

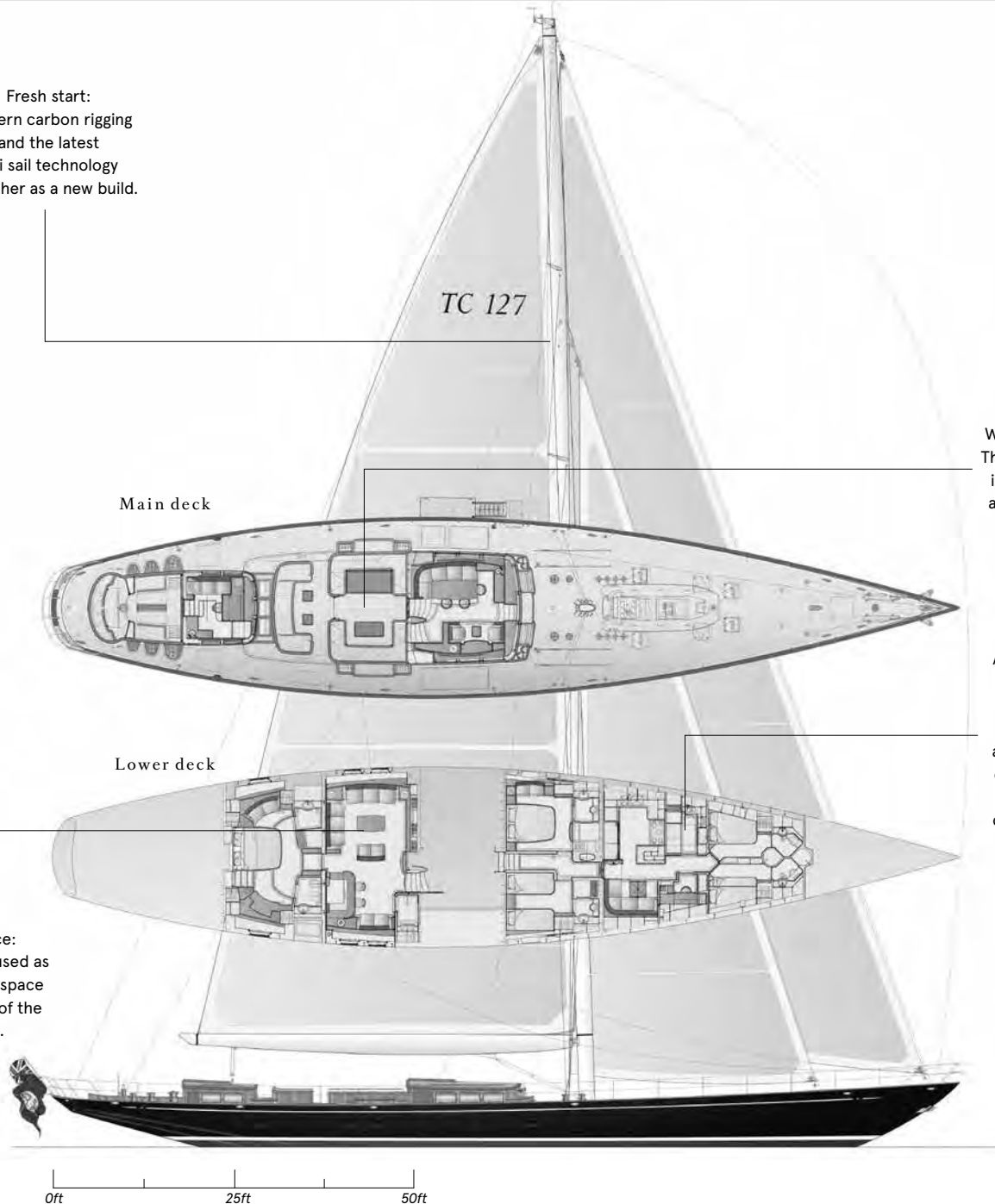
Main deck

Well-protected:  
The main cockpit  
is sheltered by  
a sturdy bimini.

Lower deck

At your service:  
Extending the  
yacht's length  
gave space for  
a "reserve crew  
cabin" that can  
double as a  
captain's office.

Owner's choice:  
The salon can be used as  
a private owner's space  
or be the center of the  
social scene.



**LOA:** 127' 4" (38.8m)  
**LWL:** 91' 8" (27.95m)  
**Beam:** 25' 3" (7.7m)  
**Draft:** 14' 9" (4.5m)  
**Displacement:** 140 tonnes  
**Air draft:** 158' 6" (48.3m)  
**Power:** 440-hp Scania

**Speed under power  
(max/cruise):** 12.5/11 knots  
**Fuel capacity:**  
3,170 U.S. gallons  
**Sails:** North Sails 3Di  
**Spars:** Offshore Spars  
**Total sail area:** 10,118 sq. ft.

**Generators:** 2 x 32kW  
Northern Lights OM944T  
**Freshwater capacity:**  
1,189 U.S. gallons  
**Owner and guests:** 6  
**Crew:** 4-5  
**Tender:** Williams Dieseljet 505

**Construction:** Aluminum  
**Classification:** ABS @ A1  
Commercial Yachting Service,  
MCA LY2 Unrestricted  
**Project management:**  
Nigel Ingram/MCM  
**Naval architecture:**  
Hoek Design Naval Architects

**Exterior & interior design:**  
Hoek Design Naval Architects  
**Builder/year:**  
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