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Depicted image is her sister ship Home

FDHF
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Introducing Arksen

Jasper Smith has created something we didn't know we wanted. This something is Arksen, the brand spanking new company that has backflipped into the superyacht industry for the better. Arksen isn't all glitz and glamour, it is wholesome and humble, and since launching at boot Düsseldorf in January, has deservedly gained plenty of attention.

BY LAURA NICHOLLS

To feed our curiosities and find out first-hand who this Jasper Smith fellow was, SuperYacht Times paid the new Arksen team a visit, and meeting Jasper was like meeting an old friend. The immediate traits that were striking about Jasper were his warmth and genuineness - the very same things that also run through the blood of his company. He is a romantic, and like all good storytellers, began by setting the scene as to how Arksen came to be. "As a child, I was fascinated by polar explorers like Thor Heyerdahl and Jacques Cousteau. There's a real wonder to those stories." The young Jasper soon took up a keen interest in sailing, which transpired to be an incentive for his new business venture. "A lot of people we talk to are like me. We've have had a sailing boat and have always wanted to go further. The Med is busy, so you start looking to Greenland, Patagonia, and you want a different type of vessel to get there." Like a lot of owners and sailors, Jasper has travelled the world's oceans, found flaws along the way and wanted to make it better, not just for him, but for others, and for Planet Earth. He saw an opportunity in applying technology and new innovations to the superyacht industry to benefit the Earth and maximize the enjoyment of being onboard.

Jasper didn't just wake up one day and create Arksen - it was something that evolved from his passion and time spent on the ocean. To make these dreams a reality, he sought

collaborations with some of the industry's finest: Humphreys Yacht Design for expertise on naval architecture, Design Unlimited for unique customisable interior designs and Wight Shipyard, the UK-based shipyard who are "a joy to work with and can build our boats in 8-12 months."

It is easy to imagine Jasper gaining the trust and affections of everyone he delivered his pitch to, "I pitched a very romantic notion to our partners! I explained that as a child these were the things that inspired me, these are my journeys and I would love to create a vessel that was really capable of these expeditions. I said I had the money to do it and they believed me! It resonated really well!" With an elite team of headhunted skilled individuals (with backgrounds from the technology, marine and aviation sectors and from companies such as Rolls Royce and Ferrari) and with funding from private equity, Arksen was soon becoming a strong brand with three key elements: the Arksen Series, the Arksen Foundation and the Arksen Explorers' Club.

The line of Arksen explorer yachts includes the Arksen 70, Arksen 85 and Arksen 100. "We love the technical challenges that this type of boat tries to tackle. I looked at the market and size range we are building and there are things like Nordhaven, but our endeavour is that with a strong team that brings together a lot of skills, we have created an explorer with proper credentials with all the capacity that you would need to go on extraordinary adventures." The team had to pay particular attention to what materials were to be used to create the new

range. "The marine industry is pretty traditional. Appalling, actually, in terms of the way ethically sustainable materials are used," Jasper commented. "Sustainability is something we are passionate about. So we use sustainable materials and aluminium because it is infinitely recyclable. 80% of aluminium that has ever been made is still being used."

Not only have Jasper and the team ensured that their products have a service life of 50 years and have invited "every core partner to go through the sustainable process" with them, the Arksen superyachts feature full hybrid power systems, three forms of stabilisation, full capsize recovery capabilities and autonomy-ready technology. The Arksen 85 model, in particular, has an efficient hull with ice capabilities based on that of a racing yacht and a range of 4,500 nm on a single-fuel tank when travelling at 10 knots with the ability to travel 7,500 nautical miles at 8 knots. All this can be seen in action when the first Arksen 85 prototype is rolled out of the shed at the Wight Shipyard in May 2020. The first Arksen superyacht will "stay in the business and go off on all our signature adventures, be used for research and trade shows."

"This is not superyacht kind of stuff!" Jasper explains as he presents the versions of Arksen interiors. Designed to suit leisure, research and commercial voyages, the Arksen designs delve deep into the minds and intentions of their owners. With sufficient storage for up to three months at sea, the explorers have unique layouts to include spaces such as laundry and



ARKSEN 85 SPECS

(provisional)

LOA: 26.22m

Beam: 6.84m

Top speed: 14 knots

Range at 8 knots: 7,500 nm

Guests: 14



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The Arksen 85 in build; Arksen 85 render; Jasper Smith; RIGHT: The layout of the Arksen 85 is fully customisable; ABOVE: The Arksen stand at Boot Düsseldorf

utility rooms, laboratories, media centres and workshops. “You can have a full walkthrough workshop with 3D printers, pillar drills and a small lathe. Having things like this are quite unusual for a boat this size.” ‘Interesting’ is perhaps a better way to describe Jasper’s creations, particularly in the way the guest accommodation has been configured to include a library, office or additional guest room: “The idea is that you can use this for a media or research platform or just go off cruising,” he added.

There is definitely a core customer for Arksen: one who is excited about the great outdoors and can compromise on excessive luxury decor for the tools and workspaces to hunt for Mother Nature’s treasures. “It’s cost effective in the nicest way, it’s functional, and we use natural materials, such as cork. We’re using clever production systems.” This is glamorous high-tech camping on the sea for those who want to make a difference. In recognition of this, Arksen has put together the Arksen Foundation - a not-for-profit organisation set up to provide project funding, support cutting-edge scientific research and create innovative media to inspire a greater understanding of the beauty, complexity and fragility of the ocean ecosystem. “The most important thing is that this has all started from a love and passion for the ocean and with the Arksen Foundation we’ve started supporting projects like Seabed 2030 which is a project aiming to complete a global map of the seafloor by 2030 as only 10% of the seafloor is actually mapped. Another is Adventure Science, which is an interesting group that gives adventurers the support to contribute to big data projects. We also help out various academic institutions with their research projects.”

So what has all of this got to do with being a superyacht owner? “So the idea is that every owner that buys into Arksen donates some time on their vessel to produce some findings that can go into these projects. Our owners then sit on the board of the Foundation so collectively we can decide who and what we

support.” In a bid to try and make being part of the Foundation mandatory, Jasper goes on to describe his pitch: “I flew out to Australia to meet a guy who’s interested in an Arksen vessel. We had a good debate about the Foundation. He said, ‘it’s my boat why would I bother?’ but by the time I had explained the rationale and the benefits he loved the idea! Boats love to be used! The combination of a robust, well-thought-through vessel that gives people the confidence and motivation to go further and have something that has a genuine benefit to the ocean feels like a really investible proposition!”

He’s not wrong - and his mission to continue to build the Arksen community doesn’t stop there. The Arksen Explorers’ Club encourages owners to go even further. “I’ve been lucky to do lots of great adventures. However intrepid I am, I am still scared, and a large part of that fear is being onboard a big boat in the middle of the sea and feeling totally alone. So actually having access to a support network is great. The Explorers’ Club will advise you what the best route is, and by using automation technology as a guardian angel, it is really powerful!”

“Owning an Arksen vessel is not a status symbol. It is a statement of intent.” This statement of intent comes with a price tag of €6,000,000 for which you get to own the Action Man equivalent of a superyacht, the opportunity to help scientific and artistic work around the globe, access to expertly crafted travel itineraries and to be a part of a community of like-minded ethically conscious people... Jasper Smith is definitely onto something. ♦