

Two Decades of Design

Francesca Webster caught up with **Valentina Zannier**, Chief Interior Designer at Nuvolari Lenard about how she has built her impressive career aboard some of the worlds most incredible superyachts.

Valentina Zannier has spent the last 21 years at the Italian design studio Nuvolari Lenard, working her way up from junior assistant to her current position as Chief Interior Designer. Today Valentina works on some of the most coveted superyachts in the world – we met during the Monaco Yacht Show where the recently delivered 115-metre Lürssen superyacht *Ahpo* was demonstrating to the world exactly what the designer has to offer.

Having originally studied architecture at the Università luav di Venezia, her flair for interior design may be something of a surprise, but Valentina explains that art and design was always her passion. However, at 18 she followed her parents advice, shying away from art school at the last minute to take on a ‘more serious’ path through academia. Six years into a role at an architectural firm, one of her colleagues mentioned that their neighbour (a designer) was looking for someone who was talented at sketching by hand. The design studio turned out to be Nuvolari Lenard, and despite never having seen a superyacht, and suffering from interminable seasickness, she took the role, never looking back.

In her two decades, Valentina has worked on some of the industries most recognisable yachts, and as the negotiations for *Ahpo* began, Valentina and the team were in the final stages of delivering *Nord*, the military-esque 141.63-metre Lürssen which was launched in June 2020. Valentina explains, “The design and completion of *Nord* was an intense period for the studio, the owner’s had a singular vision for how they wanted their vessel to be completed and I worked closely with them for many years. It’s a project we are all very proud of, and I hope we will be able to share with the industry one day!”

Like many designers of Nuvolari Lenard’s calibre, it is a rare thing when owners allow the interiors of their yacht to be shared, with many of these larger superyachts remaining with a single owner for decades and operating

privately. *Ahpo*, therefore, offers Valentina a unique opportunity to showcase the hard work and style of her team.

“I had worked with the owners of *Ahpo* on their previous superyacht, the 86-metre Lürssen superyacht *Quattroelle*, which they sold shortly after her launch in 2013. At the time of her sale the owner’s reached out to us and said they would return to the yachting industry and when they entered negotiations for *Ahpo*, we were involved from the start. Her interiors [which were first unveiled earlier this year when she joined the charter market with Moran Yacht & Ship] are bright, open and romantic and truly encapsulate my personal style.”

Organic forms and open spaces decked with opulent materials and furnished in a rich yet comfortable style define *Ahpo*’s expansive interiors, which become more formal the higher you go. Each deck is home to a distinct aesthetic, with sometimes surprising material choices that were really

embraced by the owners. A perfect example of this is the winter garden on the upper deck which is home to a full rattan dining and lounge set by Italian designer Bonacina. Traditionally associated with English kitchen gardens, rattan is perhaps a surprising choice for a superyacht, but one which finds a harmonious place aboard this extravagant superyacht.

As Chief Interior Designer, there is always one project that dominates the studio’s attention, but fortunately for Valentina, creativity has always flowed freely. “Once I am comfortable with a project, I find that the creative elements come very easily to me. Of course we are occasionally asked to do things we don’t agree with, but after 20 years at Nuvolari Lenard and with many repeat owners, our clients truly trust in us and our advice, which is a wonderful thing.”

Projects like *Ahpo*, *Nord* and the 106.7-metre Oceanco sailing yacht *Black Pearl*, which was delivered in 2018, redefine

the concept of custom. Not only are the yacht exteriors new and innovative, but every iota of the interiors are custom designed and created, from the furniture, to the carpet threads. With many projects in the pipeline and a number currently under negotiation, Valentina and her team are busy despite the finalisation of *Ahpo*, but any spare time is spent researching and developing new materials and design motifs to be employed in future projects.

When it comes to impressive portfolios, that of Valentina and of the entire Nuvolari Lenard team really takes the biscuit. Valentina has built her career aboard some of the most impressive superyachts in the global fleet, and she is currently working on the ISA Sportiva 66-metre which is due for delivery in 2025, a CRN project and two vessels under construction in Turkey. We certainly look forward to what comes next and make sure to view the entire interior shoot of *Ahpo* on SuperYacht Times. ●



The beach club bar onboard *Ahpo*. The bar is situated to the aft of the beach club, the starboard side of which opens up.

GUILLAUME PLISSON (3)



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NUVOLARI LENARD



the superyacht’s conference room on the main deck with the custom resin table; Top: A detail shot of one of *Ahpo*’s staterooms.