

By Jill Bobrow | Editor



THINKING BIG IN TOUGH TIMES

OUR COVER STORY this month is about the impressive, new 90-meter motor yacht *Nero*. She is the quintessential modern classic with superb proportions—a proper yacht in the truest sense of the word. The owner and driving force behind this magnum opus, British entrepreneur and businessman Neil Taylor, took his inspiration from J.P. Morgan’s yacht, the fourth *Corsair*, which was built at Bath Iron Works in Maine in 1930.

I was immersed in writing my story about *Nero*, which greatly resembles the old *Corsair*, when I had to stop what



**Corsair Yachts’
296-foot *Nero***

I was doing to take a quick business trip to New York City. I stayed at the New York Yacht Club, of which Morgan served as commodore. I picked up my key at the quartermaster’s desk and went to my room. Lo and behold, it was the *Corsair* room (every room at the NYYC is named after a famous yacht). I was tickled by the coincidence and went to the model room to search for *Corsair*. The model room is filled with amazing replicas of world-famous yachts. I found a half model among the many on the spectacular room’s walls.

As planned, the following day I drove to the Derektor shipyard in Bridgeport, Connecticut, to check out the new Tim Heywood-designed motor yacht *Cakewalk* being built there. Within the first five minutes of my visit, Bill Zinser, *Cakewalk’s* project manager, explained to me that this 85.6-meter steel yacht under construction would be the largest American-built yacht since the fourth *Corsair*. Was I experiencing *Corsair* karma?

Both John Pierpont Morgan and his son J.P. Morgan were nuts about boats. Prior to the fourth *Corsair*, the elder Morgan built three *Corsairs*, each bigger, more luxurious and faster than the previous one—which is, of course, par for the course with many yachtsmen. It is somewhat amusing that the Morgans chose the name *Corsair*, given the meaning of the word. *Corsairs* were legitimized privateers: essentially pirates with permission to commandeer foreign vessels for economic gain for the king of France who took one third of the booty.

I wonder what Morgan would have thought of what has happened in the banking world today? Would he have carried on building boats during a financial crisis? The answer likely is yes, and the positive impacts on the economy likely would have been welcomed. *Corsair* was built at the beginning of the Great Depression. I’m sure the employees of Bath Iron Works were happy to have the work.

The owner of the new *Cakewalk* is another man with vision and thoughts of the future. It takes a lot of gump-tion to build big during tough economic times. I am sure the 242 workers in Bridgeport dedicated to the project are happy there is someone out there keeping them measuring, installing, welding and cutting.

Nero’s four years in build supported a countless cast of people, with a team of 30 Europeans and as many as 400 Chinese working on her. Similar to other megayachts, she is staffed by a large crew and, as is the way with yachts, she will require periodic work and maintenance, thus she will continue to support many for years to come.

Dream yachts of old, dream yachts recently launched and dream yachts under construction will help keep the American Dream alive for many.

Alexis Andrews (inset); Pamela Jones (top)