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281' *Cakewalk*

# SETTING NEW STANDARDS

Derektor Shipyards, Tim Heywood Design, Dalton Designs, myriad subcontractors and 250 laborers helped a visionary owner realize the largest yacht ever built in America. Was it a cakewalk?

STORY Jill Bobrow | PHOTOS Jeff Brown, Superyacht Media and Andy Frame



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**I**t's a cakewalk," in modern vernacular, indicates that something is effortless or easy. The expression originated in the early days of American slavery and derives from a kind of strutting dance around a circle or a chalk line. The "cakewalk" dance hit its pinnacle of recognition at the 1876 Centennial of American Independence in Philadelphia; the winning performing couple of the "2/4 step dance" was awarded a gigantic cake. In 1902, Scott Joplin immortalized the term cakewalk in his folk ballet, *The Ragtime Dance*.

So does her namesake define the *Cakewalk* in these pages? Was this easy victory? Piece of cake? Child's play? ...Hardly. The making of *Cakewalk* has been an extremely challenging venture, but according to all involved with her creation, both the process and the results have proved extremely rewarding.

*Cakewalk* is arguably the most celebrated yacht built in the United States in decades. At 281' (85.6m), she is the largest American-built yacht by length since JP Morgan's *Corsair IV* was launched at the onset of the Great Depression, and just shy of 3,000 tons, she is the largest yacht by volume ever built here. Just as *Corsair IV* was, *Cakewalk* was built during a depressed economic time. Bill Zinser, *Cakewalk's* owner's representative, says the owner had "the guts to do the first real European-style superyacht at an American yard, taking a tremendous risk at one of the worst times in history." Zinser adds that "history will prove it was a smart move."

While *Cakewalk's* early beginnings can be traced back to 2005, the first metal was not cut until 2007. The scale model was unveiled at the September 2008 Monaco Yacht Show. That same week Lehman Brothers bit the dust and the credit crisis created widespread mayhem. The *Cakewalk* project forged full steam ahead.

Having followed the build, I had seen her many times at various stages of completion. Still, I was duly impressed when I saw *Cakewalk* in full glory at her grand debut party held in conjunction with the International SeaKeepers Society at the 2010 Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show. From every vantage point, *Cakewalk* makes a stunning statement.

The realization of this enterprising undertaking is attributable first and foremost to her visionary owner. Having owned several megayachts (including two Fead-

ships,) this Colorado businessman is no novice to the luxury yacht world. The owner and Zinser, his loyal captain for more than 16 years, investigated all possible yards before deciding to award the build to Derecktor Shipyards.

Much to-do has been made of this boat being US-built. It is common knowledge to anyone who has been reading about *Cakewalk* that the owner set out to prove that in America we can build a boat as well as the European builders. During an economic recession and with nearly 10 percent unemployment in the United States, this makes for a nice story, which has been broadly communicated to the international press.

While it is true that the boat was built at an American yard, *Cakewalk* was a collaborative effort involving people of many nationalities. Exterior designer Tim

**OWNER'S DECK:** This deck amounts to a seven-room suite with an oak-paneled bar and salon, which doubles as a cinema. The aft deck provides for elegant dining. A gym, yoga studio, beauty salon and massage room precede the bedroom



Heywood and engineering designers BMT Nigel Gee are British; Azure Naval Architects' Hugo van Wieringen is Dutch, as are engineers Vripack and subcontracted air-conditioning experts Heinen & Hopman. The engines are German-built MTUs, albeit purchased through US-based Detroit Diesel.

As on any yacht of high quality, the equipment and specification list is a mixed bag of manufacturing from Ohio to Belgium and Italy to New Zealand. Plus, on any given day at the yard, you meet workers who came from Jamaica, Portugal, Honduras, Italy or elsewhere, all expertly plying their craft in their new home. Just as America is the melting pot of the world, so is *Cakewalk* the melting pot of megayachts. *Cakewalk* embodies the true American Dream story.

**OWNER'S SUITE:**

An office serves as anteroom to the master stateroom and its four-poster bed facing a surround of windows. His-and-hers bathrooms feature exquisite marble

Comments heard on the docks along the line that we in America are *finally* building something as well as the Dutch or the Germans are a bit surprising. After all, the United States has historically enjoyed a reputation of being excellent at building, producing and creating. The country still is the world's largest manufacturer, accounting for 20 percent of the global manufacturing output (followed by Japan and China, respectively). We are innovators in technology; how about the light bulb, the Internet, Google, all things Apple, the laser, the solar cell, GPS technology? And this is not the first "good" yacht that Derecktor Shipyards has ever built either.

Founded in 1947 by the legendary Bob Derecktor in Mamaroneck, NY, the shipyard has always enjoyed an impeccable reputation. Back in the day, Derecktor was well





known for competitive sailing yachts, such as America's Cup defenders *Courageous*, *Intrepid* and *Stars and Stripes*. Of late, Derecktor has built many commercial boats and ferries at its larger and newer Bridgeport facility and has refitted many fine yachts in the Northeast and in its Florida shipyard. Yet, until *Cakewalk*, the yard had never taken on a project of such complexity and enormity.

President Paul Derecktor, Bob's eldest son, is a contemplative man in his early 50s. He has a rather serious demeanor but can easily break into a charming smile. Perhaps it is simply his New England reserve, but he is not given to verbosity or braggadocio. He admits with a chuckle that he wishes the yard had had a chance to work its way up instead of jumping into an 85.6m. The last sizable private motoryacht Derecktor launched was barely 120' long. But the shipyard had long-standing resources. Paul's brother, Tom, jumped back into the family business when the *Cakewalk* construction began, and he has proved to be invaluable as chief liaison with the

workers, subcontractors and Bill Zinser's team.

"I think it came out pretty well, I am pretty happy," says Paul, summing the build in a few words. He dismisses talk of being late on launching. "Well, with the first big one, we were bound to be a little behind schedule, but compared to others, I think we did okay," he adds. When asked what he thinks Derecktor's strong suit is, Paul is quick to say, "I am old school. Like my dad used to say, the product should speak for itself." As laconic as he can be, Paul does get animated when talking about the experience of building for *Cakewalk's* owners. "They are wonderful, the best clients we have ever had," he says.

The owner and his wife are experienced yachtspeople who know what they like and know how to get it. Key to getting what they wanted was their long-time captain. Zinser, by anybody's standards, is a gentleman, unpretentious, amiable and forthcoming. And he gets the job done. The Bridgeport yard is a no-frill facility focused

**BRIDGE DECK:** The more casual bridge-deck salon is a favorite area for the owners and guests to play cards. The bridge itself features state-of-the-art electronics by companies such as Raytheon and Furuno, plus offices for the crew and captain. A bird's-eye view shows some of the many areas available for outdoor dining and relaxation



**MAIN DECK:** The main deck salon provides many options for convivial groupings. Inside the main salon, the focal point is an elegant hand-carved Italian marble fireplace, flanked by bookshelves

on building boats and some of the offices are in trailers. That is where Zinser spent the better part of every week during the last three years.

As far as the rest of the *Cakewalk* team, the owner admired Tim Heywood's work—in particular *Carinthia VII*—and was confident in his ability to deliver the right look for hull shape and exterior styling. Heywood, a dashing icon who has built yachts for royalty, thoroughly enjoyed his experience with the owner and the shipyard. He says he was “always a fan of American engineering and never really understood why the yachting market in the States had never attempted to build larger boats.” When discussing his feelings about the finished boat, he says, “The structure, the engineering and the finish are all without comparison, they are really first class.” The Heywood hull swoop is in fact quite distinctive. Heywood, with a glint in his eye, calls himself “the king of curves.” He says, “Try and build a straight line out of 50 meters of steel and

keep it perfectly straight. Curves can benefit a boat. When the sunlight hits the curves, it brings the boat alive.”

Van Wieringen, from Azure Naval Architects, was key to execution. He worked diligently on structure, systems, weight and stability. He has vast experience. Moreover, he had worked with the owner as chief designer on a new build and a refit when he was at Feadship.

The owners have stayed largely in their comfort zone with their *Cakewalk* team. Interior designer, Elizabeth Dalton of Dalton Designs, had worked with the owners on their private homes and other yachts, so she too was re-enlisted to help. With the core team and subcontractors in place, the build worked at a full crescendo. Like a classical piece of music, with a director leading string section, then percussion, then the horns, the build of *Cakewalk* was set in motion, each player coming in on cue.

So what about the boat itself? The owner of *Cakewalk* decided to build a boat of this enormity in part to fit in

everything he wanted. The boat, which started at 75m, kept growing in order to accommodate everything. Number one on that “want list” was the capability to carry significant tenders: a 10m limited-edition Aquariva 100 Cento, a custom Intrepid 350 Open Sportfish, an 11.3m Vikal limousine designed by Tim Heywood and four PWCs. Devising a 2,000-plus-sq-foot tender garage that complied with classifications and could allow maneuvering the boats on and off easily was no simple task. The rest of the boat was nearly secondary to the garage.

The boat comprises six guest decks and a tank deck. Some areas have extra-wide promenade walkarounds and others are full beam. A signature spiral staircase (similar to the other *Cakewalks*) connects the guest decks and provides a stunning bird’s-eye view all the way from the top down to the main deck. It is easy to get lost on this boat,

so at the risk of sounding like a real estate agent, let’s start at the top. The photos and captions on these pages will best describe each of the significant spaces. The sun deck has six-observation chairs forward and a cozy bar to slide up to. There is a casual indoor lounge and the aft portion of this deck sports the spa pool and loungers. The bridge deck, which includes the sizable ship’s office, features multiple stations for captain, crew, and navigation. Guests will find on this level what is affectionately called the card room.

Dalton—a perky, attractive woman—is not a hard-boiled interior “desecrator.” She keeps a sense of humor and believes wholeheartedly in her projects. She calls *Cakewalk* an exuberant boat. The whole interior design concept is not that of a “yacht interior”, but designed as a home. She worked closely with the owner’s wife on this

**MAIN SALON:** Forward of the main salon is the magnificent oval-shaped dining room with custom-built dining table for 12, built-in breakfronts and an illuminated overhead with a chandelier designed by Elizabeth Dalton



*Cakewalk*. Perfecting the flow, she tweaked renderings two and three times until it felt right.

The style mixes European and American, classic and modern. The bridge-deck room is Palm Beachy with a pecky cypress overhead. The owners like to play bridge, poker and gin rummy with friends, so this area is meant to be relaxed and casual. The next deck down is the owner's deck. It is tantamount to a seven-room suite. The owner's salon, called the oak room, doubles as a cinema. Before entering the bedroom, paneled in cerused oak, you find both a gym and a yoga/beauty salon/massage room. Naturally, there are his-and-hers bathrooms and adjoining dressing rooms. The main idea behind all of Dalton's decisions was to ensure that every space had a fresh idea. There was definitely not going to be a stodgy man's club feel, no Persian rugs. She wanted everything to feel more modern and jazzy. The furniture is an eclectic mix of chinoiserie, antiques and replicas. Going down one level to the main deck, you find the salon/library where a faux fireplace in hand-carved Italian marble flanked by bookshelves serves as focal point. Overhead is a white-coffered ceiling, and on both sides are enormous picture windows. Forward is the dining salon, with a raised dome overhead and a round stained-cherry dining table with inlays of rosewood, boxwood and ebony under a chandelier designed by Dalton. The

carpet in this area was loomed as one piece in Tibet.

Forward of the main deck, unusually, are all the guest cabins. Four feature king beds plus a day bed; two additional cabins have twin beds. The owners wanted their guests to enjoy prime real estate. Each room has a different décor and bathroom appointments so as not to feel too much like a hotel. To that end great effort went into creating different lobbies with special stonework, parquets and custom carpets. Picasso pen-and-inks, oils and antique lithographs are part of the varied artwork. "The people who have the money to charter this boat will have presumably traveled many places and will appreciate fine things," Dalton says.

Two subcontractors did the exquisite woodwork. Ohio-based Merritt Woodwork did the remarkable master suite and card room, among other areas, and Zepsa Industry in Charlotte, NC, handled the guest accommodations, lobbies and stairs. They did a magnificent job. Everywhere you look, you discover some new gem. It takes many visits aboard to appreciate all the nuances.

Yacht brokers have their own adjectival phrases to describe the yachts they are routing. They may say something is Feadship-class, Lürssen-built or Oceanco-standard. Zinser has coined the term Cakewalk-quality.

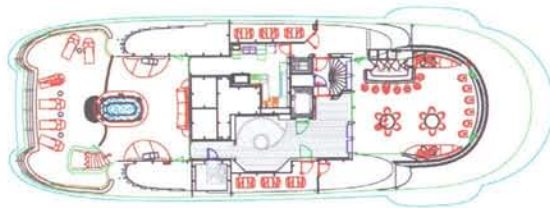
The next big one at Derektor is bound to be a real cakewalk. ■

**SUN DECK:** The sun deck features a comfortable bar forward and a swimming pool and lounge area aft. The ceramic mermaid mural was commissioned for *Cakewalk*

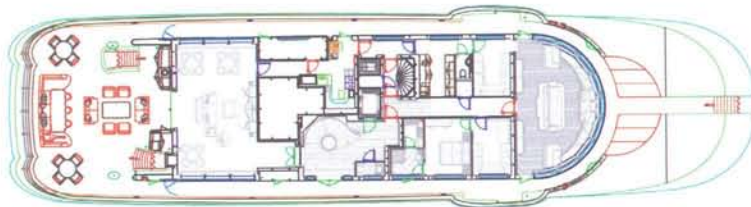




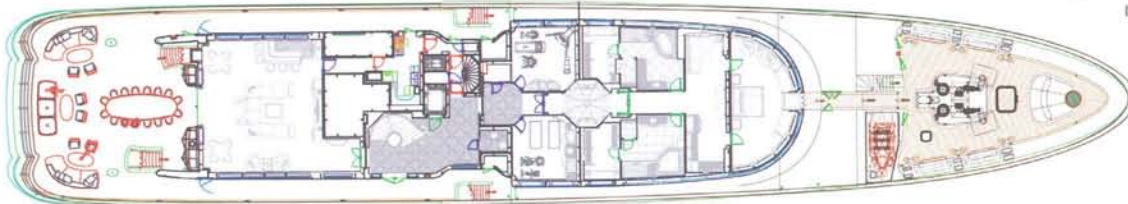
**ABOVE:** According to all concerned with *Cakewalk's* build, the tender garage was central to the yacht's design. The owner wanted plenty of room for his Vikal, Intrepid, Aquariva tenders and assortment of PWCs



SUN DECK



BRIDGE DECK



OWNER'S DECK



MAIN DECK



For more information, visit  
DEREKTOR.COM  
or contact:  
TIM@TIMHEYWOODDESIGNS.CO.UK,  
DALTONDESIGNSINC.COM

## 281' Derektor Cakewalk

LOA: 281' (85.60m)  
LWL: 248' (75.08m)  
BEAM: 46'11" (14.30m)  
DRAFT: 13'11" (4m)  
GROSS TONNAGE: 2,998 GT  
PROPULSION: 2 x 16V4000 M71 MTUs,  
3,306 hp @ 2,000 rpm  
PROPELLER:  
2 x Rolls-Royce 5-blade single pitch  
SPEED: 17 knots/15 knots  
FUEL CAPACITY: 97,000 gal. (370,000 l)

RANGE: 5,000 nm @ 15 knots  
GENERATORS:  
2 x MTU 2000 series V12 M-40B @  
660 kW  
2 x MTU S60 550 series @ 350 kW  
1 x MTU S60 400 series @ 275 kW  
STABILIZERS: 4 x Quantum ZeroSpeed  
BOW THRUSTER: Jastram 400 kW  
WINDLASSES: Steen  
PAINT: Awlgrip  
EXTERIOR DESIGN: Tim Heywood Designs

NAVAL ARCHITECTURE: Azure Naval  
Architects  
INTERIOR DESIGN: Elizabeth Dalton,  
Dalton Designs, Inc  
TENDERS: Riva, Vikal, Intrepid, Zodiac  
CLASSIFICATION: Lloyd's Maltese Cross  
100A ISSC yacht (P) mono G6  
CONSTRUCTION: steel hull, aluminum  
superstructure  
BUILDER: Derektor Shipyards  
YEAR: 2010

\*Original dimensions are provided in the metric system