

The Female Force

With the tides turning for the superyacht industry when it comes to gender typical roles, the shift in momentum is certainly evident across all sectors that Damen Yachting is involved in from the yacht design and building phases through to yacht management, operation and service. We caught up with some of those paving the way to create new traditions for the future of our industry and asked them to share the realities of what is it like to be part of the female force reshaping the industry's career landscape.



Mairin Hunter

CHIEF OFFICER

Mairin, better known as Mez, joined the superyacht industry in 2010, leaving her home and role in the family business behind in New South Wales, Australia as she searched for a challenging career involving the sea.

"It's not unusual to find female Chief Officers, it's just not common in yachting. In the merchant maritime sector, there are many females completing cadetships and sailing on commercial vessels as deck and engineering officers which is great to see. It takes time to follow the progression route to qualify as a Senior Officer and Captain making it harder for females to combine a career and family. I do get the odd look when officials or pilots come on board and they expect me to offer them a drink rather than manoeuvre the boat! That said, the industry is generally very accommodating to women in deck and engineering roles and the maritime colleges have always been very helpful and supportive."



"They expect me to offer them a drink rather than manoeuvre the boat!"

Paving the way for new traditions



"Be determined and follow your dreams. Stereotypes are not set in stone."

Moena Maggi

DESIGN & PROPOSAL ENGINEER – DAMEN YACHTING

Italian born Moena is no stranger to a career in a male dominated world. Fascinated by technical subjects and the complexity of ship design, her educational and career roots lie in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering.

"I was introduced to the world of superyachts whilst working at Lloyds Register where I developed their stability guideline for yachts. I quickly realised this was an industry that reflected my personality far more than other maritime sectors: high standards and high expectations! Throughout my career, I have got very used to being one of the only women in a technical role but compared to the commercial sector, the yachting industry is somewhat less male-dominated. That said, I am currently one of only two women in my department, but I am confident that female involvement in such roles is slowly increasing. You just have to be determined and follow your dreams. Stereotypes are not set in stone."

Elouise Reiff

PROJECT MANAGER – DAMEN YACHTING

Elouise joined the Damen group as a General Trainee having studied Marine Technology at the Delft University of Technology. Developing a preference for Project Management it wasn't long before the world of yachting within the company caught her attention.

"It was the nature of the projects that first caught my attention – the demands they set in terms of expectation, quality and finish. I am the first female Project Manager at Damen Yachting which is surprising given we have quite a few women working in technical and operational functions but I don't have the feeling I am doing something unusual. I love what I do, I feel comfortable and respected in my working environment and I have multiple females in my project team. I have been very determined to end up in the shipbuilding industry since I was young and my education choices and path to my career have been focussed on that. The best part now is, just 50 metres away, the actual yacht I am working on is being built. That's inspiring."



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"Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life."

Maria Filushkina

OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE / YACHT MANAGEMENT

Maria's career in the superyacht industry started 6 years ago when the family she was working for invited her to move from their dedicated Concierge Services company to fill the combined role of Project Coordinator for their new build superyacht, an Amels 242, and Family Lifestyle Manager.

"It really was a leap of faith and came with a steep learning curve, coordinating the process of communication between the Owner and other parties related to the new build project: shipyard, designers, management company, technical management, captain etc. I personally have not met anyone who fulfils the same role as me, working directly for the Owner and their family. As for why, I am not sure. There are of course other women who are managing similar processes from the Management Company's side, which is a great place to start for anyone looking to get into the industry in a similar role as you can see where your passion lies – charter, management or new build. To quote the Chinese philosopher Confucius, 'choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life.'"



Charlotte Pedersen

HELICOPTER PILOT
AND CEO

Charlotte's career turns all preconceptions of stereotypical male occupations upside down. She was Denmark's first female applicant to become a military pilot and 30 years on, is CEO of Luxaviation Helicopters active in helicopter support and services for the superyacht industry.

"I was introduced to the yachting industry when I joined the luxury aviation sector after my military flying career in helicopter search & rescue and medical flying. I had also spent some time in regulatory oversight as an inspector for the civil aviation authorities. This experience in combination with my Masters in Business proved to be a unique mix that perfectly served the needs of the superyacht sector. It is certainly not as unusual to see female CEO's and female pilots as it was 30 years ago but it is by no means the norm. Thankfully more and more women are entering the aviation industry, which like the superyacht industry, has always been a more male-dominated world. When I started my military career, people were probably more sceptical than surprised. Unconvinced of the idea of female pilots let alone female military pilots. Today, my career is still met with surprise but also with interest, fascination and respect. It is after all an unusual career!"

"People were probably more sceptical than surprised. Unconvinced of the idea of female pilots."

Zoé Moisan

CHIEF ENGINEER

When it comes to seaworthy credentials, Zoé has them all. She joined the French Merchant Navy aged just 20, served as a First Engineer, has her own sailing boat which she lives on and has sailed as far as French Polynesia and has worked on different types of luxury yachts as both a Second and Chief Engineer.

"After many years in the French Merchant Navy I was ready for a new challenge, but I knew it needed to involve the sea. When an opportunity arose to work on a 60-metre superyacht as a Second Engineer I grabbed it straight away. Luxury yachting was a complete new world for me but the work I do on board remains the same. People are certainly more used to see women on board yachts than on board commercial vessels but seeing females in Engineering roles still remains unusual in both industries. A lot of people just don't expect to find females on board who know all about the technical systems, the propulsion, power management, air-conditioning, water production and treatment, AV/IT and water toys and tenders! I am often told, by chandlers, agents and suppliers, that I am the first female Chief Engineer on yacht."



"People just don't expect to find females on board who know all about the technical systems."



Ellie Younis

CHIEF OFFICER

Ellie's career in the yachting industry started as a relief 'Deckie' when her brother called her up 6 years ago asking if she was interested in helping out the boat he was working on. A week later she had completed the necessary STWC and ENG1 qualifications, was on a plane to Sardinia and has never looked back.

"I instantly knew that this was exactly what I wanted to do and I ended up staying 18 months. I have since worked on a number different yachts, all in Deck department roles. When I first started it was unusual to find females working on Deck and in the engine room but I have been fortunate to meet more and more ladies stepping into these roles as my career has gone on. I have been really lucky to work with Captains and crew who have been very supportive of this. The only person who has ever told me I wouldn't get a job on Deck was an agent in the Caribbean. I was determined to prove her wrong. Two days later I saw her as I was walking with my bags to join my new yacht as Deckhand. I've since worked my way up to Chief Officer."

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Women in Yachting in Monaco

At the 2019 Monaco Yacht Show, we held our first ever "Women in Yachting" event. A chance for females of the industry – CEOs, business owners, interior designers, brokers, crew, project and engineering specialists, media and journalists and more – to come together and share their experiences of the highs and lows of a challenging and male-dominated industry.





ROSE DAMEN
MANAGING DIRECTOR
DAMEN YACHTING

"Women in Yachting – in fact diversity in all its forms – is good for our business. Women are succeeding in every part of this industry, including traditionally 'male' professions and I'm proud that Damen Yachting is leading the way. I'm inspired by several pioneering female Amels and Damen Yachting Owners, who all smashed stereotypes during their careers."

Women at DAMEN YACHTING

Over the last year we have been actively promoting women in yachting. It is great to see our female role models inspiring women to find their future in yachting. We're thankful to all the women working on our yachts – including client teams, co-makers and our employees.



Client Teams

With a female Chief Officer (Ellie Younis), female Chief Engineer (Zoé Moisan) and 50:50 female:male crew balance, B3 is all about female opportunity but, as Ellie explains, this takes some getting used to. *"I have had a couple of occasions where I have had a few surprised workers. I get stared at blankly for a few seconds but once the initial surprise wears off, everyone just gets on with the work in hand."*



Co-makers

This team of female painters has quite a reputation for attention to detail in a job they certainly don't consider 'women's work'. Based in Romania, they have worked regularly at our Dutch yards with us for up to 10 years. *"Equality is definitely in the Dutch DNA and it can be sensed in the shipyard throughout all levels of management. We really appreciate being treated equally and respectfully."*

Damen Yachting Gdynia

Damen Yachting's list of women at work would not be complete without our colleagues at Damen Yachting's principal yacht hull-building yard in the port town of Gdynia in Poland's Tricity metropolitan area. The Damen yard has been part of our Amels Limited Editions story from the beginning.



DENISE MAAS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

As the longest serving female in the company, Denise has witnessed almost 2 decades of growth at Damen Yachting and not only in terms of the company itself. *"There is certainly a notable difference to when I started in 2001. I was used to being the minority in a male working environment having joined from de Schelde and in the early years females were few and far between. It is now great to see women working across all parts of the organisation – it certainly wasn't like that in the beginning! I hope that the growth of Damen Yachting continues as it has done and with it, that the number of women across the entire company continues to grow."*

