

THE SILVER STREAK

WORDS RYAN SWIFT PHOTOS HENRY CHIU

Silver Zwei was recently in Hong Kong, where her owner enjoyed Sai Kung and spoke about his obsession with efficiency





Silver Zwei covered the distance between Abu Dhabi and Singapore in 12 days, averaging 20 knots at 400 litres/hour.

► **ON MEETING GUIDO KRASS, THE GERMAN ECO-INDUSTRIALIST AND OWNER/BUILDER OF SILVER AND HIS SECOND YACHT, SILVER ZWEI (ZWEI IS GERMAN FOR TWO), YOU GET THE FEELING THAT HE'S QUIETLY TAKING NOTE OF EVERY PIECE OF INFORMATION OR DETAIL THAT COULD BE NEEDED LATER.** Krass is obsessed with efficiency. It's a topic that he brings up often, particularly as he is guiding a guest about his very distinctive 73-metre superyacht, which recently visited Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour.

Krass made his fortune starting and running companies in the green energy field, in particular, photovoltaic power generation, and in fitting and refitting buildings for energy efficiency. You can trace a direct line between that single-minded focus on efficiency and the sleek lines of *Silver Zwei*. After all, the field of renewable energy generation is all about finding ways to efficiently transfer natural energy into usable electricity. Krass also speaks of the need to preserve our planet for future generations. I ask why he didn't build a sailboat in that case. "Well, I still want to be able to go quickly from A to B at times."

He also points out that most sailing superyachts are used primarily as motorsailors, adding that the majority of yachts are motoryachts. So, he concludes it's better to start promoting the advantages of efficient motoryachting. Indeed, Krass is a little unusual as a motor superyacht owner. Most tend to shy away from publicity and are rarely seen on their yachts (contrasting with sailing superyacht owners). Krass is quite happy to be onboard whenever journalists are around.

Designing boats and yachts has been described as a series of trade-offs in which the performance of a boat in one aspect is sacrificed to improve it in another. In the case of



The aft swim pad is created by lifting up the main transom door.

the *Silver* sisterships, it was a conscious decision to sacrifice volume in favour of the sleek hull shape. At 73.5 metres in length overall, she is the longest hull built out of aluminium. With a beam of just ten metres, *Silver Zwei* is the epitome of slim hull construction.

While yacht builders have been working on various hull configurations that cut fuel consumption without sacrificing volume, such designs (or the hybrid engine counterparts) often achieve cuts of fuel consumption in the ten to 15 percent range. With the slender hull shape and relatively light-weight construction, *Silver Zwei* has achieved some stunning records. Krass points out that the initial hull design was in development for nearly five years.

Numbers prove the story. *Silver Zwei* had recently covered the distance from Abu Dhabi to Singapore in 12 days, averaging



Clever storage in the bow for water toys.

speeds of around 20 knots and using about 400 litres of fuel per hour. According to Krass, that's about half of what a boat of this displacement would need. An early model Sunseeker 105, with a 31-metre length overall and 6.3-metre beam, consumes 500 litres at her cruising speed of 20 knots.

The story of her construction is as much a reflection of Guido Krass as the yacht itself. At the design stage, Krass turned to long-time friend Espen Oeino, who just happens to be one of the biggest names in superyacht design. Krass and Oeino worked together on the concept of the *Silver* and *Silver Zwei*. Taking the initial design for *Silver* to several yards, Krass concluded that no yard would actually do the job specified.

Krass therefore simply decided to establish his own yacht building company, Hanseatic Marine. Though based in Australia to take advantage of that country's expertise in fast ferry aluminium construction, Krass regards Hanseatic as a builder of European quality. Key talent from such major names as Blohm & Voss and Lürssen were recruited to handle the build and oversee quality control, while specialist designers and craftsmen from Australia's famed aluminium builders were called to the new firm's operations in Perth, Western Australia to handle the build.

Hanseatic's first launch, *Silver*, created quite a storm in the media, despite the fact that Krass doesn't advertise the company. Nonetheless, the sleek styling and fuel efficient hull were bold strokes at a time when, in 2007, most yards were building faster and faster machines that cared little for expense or fuel efficiency.

Ultimately, *Silver* would be sold to the Abu Dhabi royal family, who renamed her *Rabdan*. Krass notes the irony of having oil money purchase a yacht dedicated to fuel efficiency, but points out that Abu Dhabi has been looking ahead to the future of lower oil consumption. The government there has funded the Masdar City project, which aims to create the world's first zero-emissions city.

Krass had stopped by Hong Kong on his tour through Asia with his new 73.5-metre wonder. While Hong Kongers may have gotten a glimpse of what a thoroughbred superyacht looks



The sundeck dining area.



Main dining area on the aft deck.



Heating up the harbour? Silver Zwei's sundeck jacuzzi meets Hong Kong's million-dollar view.

like cruising through its harbours, Krass was getting a closer look at what potential there was in Asia for his many businesses.

SILVER GUY

Circling *Silver Zwei* as she was anchored in Causeway Bay, I had a chance to get a good look at her magnificent hull lines. In profile, her long, sleek exterior is accentuated by the profile that has been done to lower windage, especially in the forward sections. Yet, as you turn around the bow, it's impossible not to notice the very fine entry, with a huge chine that starts at the bow and widens quickly to the full beam of the boat, yielding as much volume as possible while keeping the hydrodynamic efficiency up.

Going on board, I am greeted by Guido Krass himself. Touring *Silver Zwei* starts with a look at the aft main deck. This area is spacious, despite the narrow beam. What is sacrificed in width is made up for in length. Krass and Oeino created a long aft deck with lots of space for al-fresco dining and entertaining. This is buttressed by the large aft-swimpad, with a fold-up transom that



The main saloon, viewed from the aft doors.



The main dining area.

creates a sizeable beach club. Connected to the main aft deck via gently sloping staircases, this is a surprisingly large outdoor fun space.

Through the main aft doors, one enters a large room that combines lounge, saloon and dining area into one, well-lit space. Browns, tans, whites and oranges are the dominant colour themes. I had heard that was due to Krass' desire to have an African theme in the main saloon; he replies that he always thought the look and feel of the 70s was the reason.

The main bulkhead that separates the dining area from the galley/crew area is nicely decorated with a full size photo of African terrain, taken by another of Krass' friends, Michael Polazi, who chartered a hot air balloon across Africa for the purpose of creating a photobook.

Moving forward along the starboard-side passageway, we find the off-centre staircase that leads down to the guest cabins. *Silver Zwei* has berths for up to 18 people in eight cabins. Thanks to its SOLAS certification, *Silver Zwei* can handle up to 36 people for day charters (not more than 60 nautical miles from safe harbour), a design and engineering feat for which Krass is proud.



Simple, yet stylish guest cabins.

While these cabins may not be the example of opulent, over-the-top luxury that some yachts go for, they are certainly well-equipped and very comfortable. Along the way, Krass shows an example of how *Silver Zwei* has been engineered: porthole covers are used to block light in the cabins, rather than an expensive, in-hull blinds.

The crew areas have been nicely kept separate from the guest areas. Discrete service is focused on the entrance to the galley from the main saloon/dining area. Recessed lighting is everywhere. Heading forward to the helm station, one finds a compact, smartly organised helm system, with the relatively narrow beam yielding excellent, all-around visibility.

Out from the side doors in the wheelhouse, there is a passage round to the front bow area of the yacht. Here, there is the touch-and-go helipad, which neatly covers up the space for the toys, plus twin 7.4-metre, custom-built tenders. One of the major differences between *Silver* and *Silver Zwei* is the removal of a bow-area seating lounge. Krass figured that this was simply not used enough to be justified, and the space put to better use for deck and sports equipment storage. Looking back from the helipad area aft, it's amazing to note how *Silver Zwei* looks more like a sportboat rather than a superyacht.

Heading back to the upper deck, we find an area almost entirely devoted to the owner. This really is an owner's yacht, and Krass admits that he's not much interested in chartering *Silver Zwei* (though she can be purchased). The owner's cabin is forward,



Silver Zwei's sleek hull shape.

and the swept windshield acts as a skylight, while the surrounding windows reveal a 180-degree view of sea facing forward. The forward facing bed is nearly as wide as the beam of the yacht as well – certainly a great place to chill out when underway!

Sunpads are located below the forward wind-shields, while a pop up TV can be made to swivel about to face any direction. Aft of the forward cabin there are his and hers washrooms. Moving further aft, one enters the owner's private suite, which features another floor-to-ceiling photo by Polazi. This opens onto the aft deck, which features more sunpads. All of the aft decks can be covered with sun shades that tastefully fit into the overall lines of the yacht.

From this aft deck, there is a continuous staircase that connects main, upper and sun deck. Moving up to the sun deck, one finds three distinct sections. At the aft end, sun pads aplenty. The mid-section features a bar plus fridges and everything to provide continuous food and beverage service. A long dining table serves up to eight guests in comfort, with ample views in every direction. Forward is a port-side Jacuzzi and adjacent settee with table – the party zone of the yacht. A permanent shade structure is built onto the sundeck, which has the added effect of enhancing *Silver Zwei's* profile and masking her radar mast.

ASIAN SOJOURNS

Guido Krass named his company Hanseatic Marine in part because of the Hanseatic League, a medieval trade grouping of cities in northern Europe that did business "on a handshake", according to Krass. Whether that is wistful nostalgia or not, it certainly indicates the way Krass would like to do business. As a trading organisation that sought collective rights for member city-states that bordered on the Baltic Sea, the Hanseatic League nearly became a state in its own right, at one point even fighting wars against competing Baltic states, and owning some of the largest trading ships of the time.

Till now, Krass' business interests have been limited to Europe, and to Australia with the opening of his shipyard. That may be changing as his gaze begins to fix more on Asia. During his trip to Singapore and then to Hong Kong, he mentions that he's been taking note of potential opportunities in the region. Further explorations may open up other ideas. For a man so devoted to energy efficiency, there is surely much to be done in Asia, and to this, Krass agrees.

Hanseatic Marine is now working on its third project, though Krass is reluctant to give details. It also has a concept ready for an ultra-efficient support vessel that would shadow a mother yacht, bringing extra toys, supplies, crew and fuel as needed. *Silver Zwei* will be remaining in Asia for a little while yet. As it does so, the notion that efficiency equalling elegance may begin to catch on. ■■■

www.hanseaticmarine.eu