



**ERIC DE SAINTDO**  
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rescue Rodriguez?  
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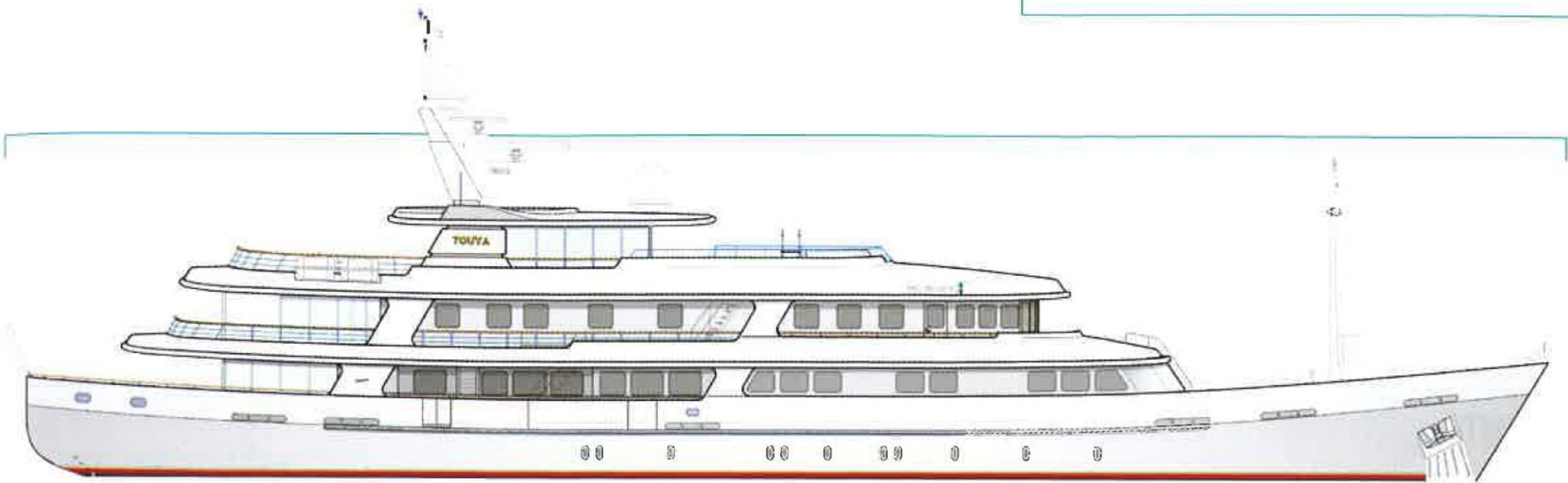
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## 1969 yacht to be reborn in just 19 months

▶ As conversions go, this project must be one of the most challenging to be undertaken in a short time frame – just 19 months at the RMK Shipyard, Tuzla, Turkey. She was totally under wraps until we visited the shipyard and peeled back swathes of plastic sheeting to reveal the yacht formerly known as *Fils de Grace* undergoing major surgery to improve her outward appearance and her volumes within.

The brief was to deliver a 'timeless and elegant' luxury superyacht with traits from the 1930s era of yachting and detailing which echoes the art deco period. Not such an unreasonable request until you see that the vessel was originally a commercial cable laying vessel (built to standards equivalent to SOLAS before these regulations were established) and then converted to a private yacht. When the owners found this 53.6m they were adamant she was the vessel that they wanted remodelled to their vision. Her lure was strength and range, primary factors as they want to cruise some remote places.

Work is well under way with her paintwork and her innards have been completely stripped back to a bare steel framework. Her

sheerline is being completely remodelled to improve her lines, the top deck has been cut off and raised by 30cm to increase the ceiling height and allow increased accommodation beneath; and the aft decks have been extended, allowing for a huge sun deck up top. The symmetry of her lines now give her a more balanced and purposeful appearance, along with a complete redesign of the mast.

The team set to realise this quest are Tim Saunders from TSYD, the designer; Kadir Sinasi Yalcinkaya, the owner's representative who is also a naval architect and marine engineer; Frank Mulder, an engineer; and Kahraman Yat, who is working on the interior construction. Management and supervision of the project is by Nautique, which is also acting as the main contractor.

With some changes to the vessel carried out before she arrived in Tuzla, it was up to Saunders to deliver a design within an honest budget.

The vessel, originally named *Directeur General Bast*, was built in 1969 in steel and measured 53.6 metres in length before being converted to *Fils de Grace*. Saunders' quest to turn her into a swan is

