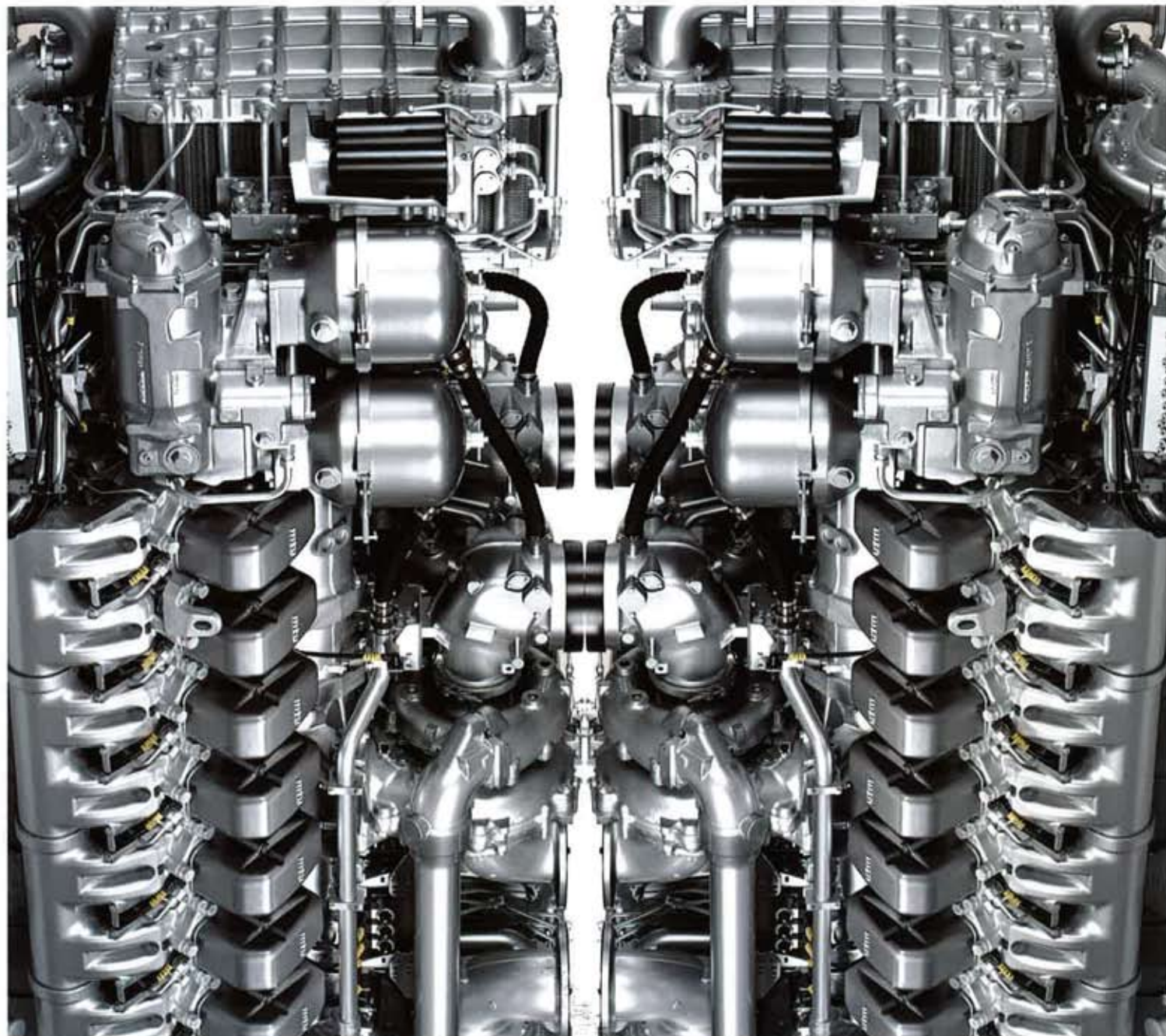


# The Superyacht

TRUTH • OPINION    KNOWLEDGE • IDEAS    AND EXPERT INDUSTRY ANALYSIS



# REPORT

## ROSSI NAVI STEPS UP

One of the great sub-contracting yards in Viareggio steps into the limelight with a series of new builds.  
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FORMERLY

**THE YACHT**  
report

The leading magazine for the design, construction, management, ownership & operation of luxury yachts.

# A Tale of 3 Brothers

By Justin Ratcliffe

Squeezed into the area around its historic *darsena* or docklands, Viareggio has the highest concentration of top-rank superyacht builders in the world. The parking is atrocious, but you don't need a car: the likes of Perini Navi, Benetti, Codecasa, Sanlorenzo and Viareggio Superyacht (VSY) are all within easy walking distance of each other. The history of Rossi Navi is intimately associated with many of these established names, but unlike them it is not widely recognised outside Italy.

In part, this is because siblings Riccardo, Claudio and Paride Rossi are boat builders first and self-promoters second. But over the past five years they have been quietly working to consolidate the family brand (three of their children also work within the company) by expanding its construction capacity in Viareggio. Following on from a first own-brand launch in 2008, their efforts have resulted in three more superyacht projects, all of which are due to launch within the next 18 months or so.

The business was founded in the mid '70s as a small metal processing workshop a few kilometres inland from Viareggio's waterfront. The site, the first of four owned by the Rossi

brothers today, is still in operation and metalworking continues to be one of the company's core competencies. By the '80s, Fratelli Rossi, as it was then known, had diversified into the construction of inland and coastal passenger vessels (indeed, there are few navigable lakes in Italy without one of their ferries ploughing its waters).

The acquisition of a site in Pisa, close to the historic yards of Cantieri di Pisa and Cantieri di Arno, meant that hulls could be floated down the River Arno to the port of Livorno, and by the early '90s the yard was busy building hulls and superstructures in both steel and aluminium for some of Viareggio's top yards. Its tooling skills also opened the door for further expansion by fabricating and fitting mechanical and hydraulic components, first for tender systems and then for custom engineering solutions aboard the yachts themselves.

In 2006, the company moved into new premises in the heart of Viareggio's yacht building district known as the *Polo Nautico* and restyled itself as Rossi Navi. Two years previously, the Pisa facility had launched 30m *Tèx*, but the limited depth of the River Arno – and the fact that vessels have to pass

For the past three decades Rossi Navi – owned and run by three brothers – has worked behind the scenes building hulls and superstructures for their superyacht neighbours in Viareggio. About to launch its own-brand 70m superyacht, with a 45m and 46m to follow next year, *The Superyacht Report* looks at a company that is moving out of the shadows and onto the big stage.

under a motorway bridge en route to Livorno – posed restrictions on launching larger completed yachts. The new 2,750m<sup>2</sup> site in Viareggio meant it could now take on turnkey projects of up to 70m. The first own-brand yacht to emerge from the new facility was 54m *South*, a handsome displacement motoryacht with interior design by *Officina Italiana Design* and launched in 2008, which undoubtedly served as a showcase of what the yard was capable of on its own. In 2009, another site was acquired close by in an area of public land development with a construction shed able to house vessels of up to 55m. The latest stage in the company's expansion of its infrastructure is the opening of a purpose-built facility in Pisa that will take over production from the existing one to open up access to the river.

All this amounts to millions of euros of investment and more than three decades of shipbuilding experience, with some 15 vessels delivered between 15m and 45m, about 60 hulls and superstructures of between 20m and 70m, as well as eight refits. In between, the yard was also responsible for the re-building of *Lukworth's* steel frames according to the original 1920 plans during the classic sailing yacht's restoration in Viareggio.

"You have to keep moving forward in this business, especially in the current economic climate," said Managing Director Claudio Rossi. "With the invaluable experience gained from working for other shipyards, there came a time when building the whole yacht was the next logical move. But it was as much a question of self-satisfaction as a commercial decision: building for others is one thing; building for yourself is another."

Herein lies the reason why, for much of its history, Rossi Navi has operated below the radar, recognised and respected by those in the boat building business, but less familiar to others outside the industry. Basing its centre of operations in Viareggio has made a massive difference in this respect:



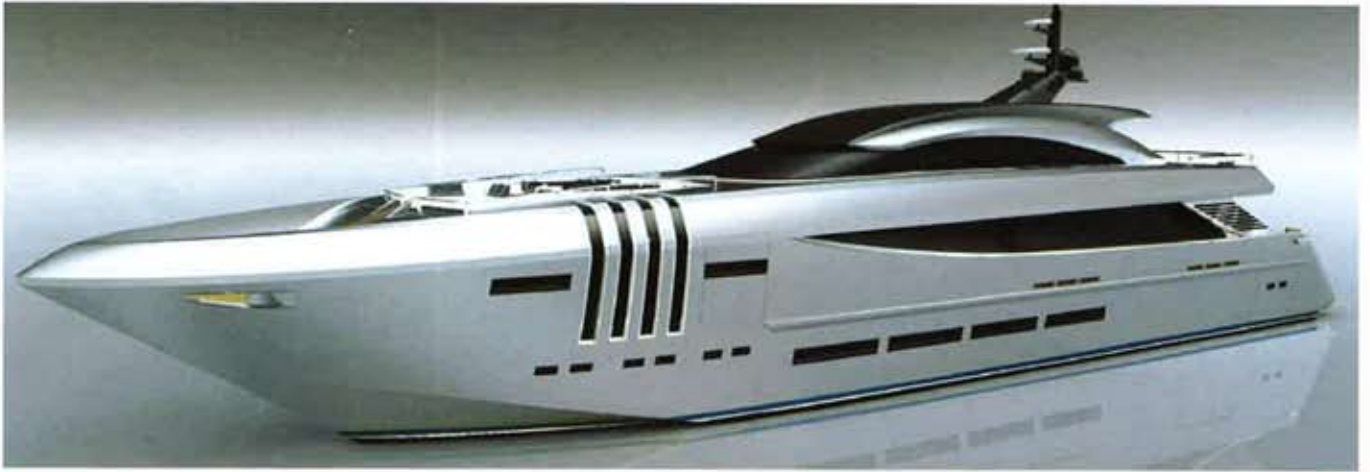
From the top:  
Claudio, Paride and Riccardo Rossi

"Moving close to the water was a major opportunity for a company like us, because we can now show that we're able to build yachts as well as the big players," continued Production Director Riccardo Rossi, speaking from Viareggio's *Polo Nautico*. "The site in Pisa is geared up for the construction of the metal hulls and superstructures, which can then be transferred here for fitting out. It means we have the production flexibility to start cutting metal before a slot in Viareggio becomes available."

After *South* left the facility in Viareggio's *Polo Nautico*, Rossi Navi began work on a 70m motoryacht for an experienced owner. With exterior lines by Tommaso Spadolini and interior design by Salvagni Architetti, the yacht is due to launch at the end of April. Owner confidentiality prevents us from talking in detail about the project, but *TSR* went aboard with Spadolini earlier this year and could not fault the quality of construction and outfitting. We can also reveal that one reason the owner signed a contract with Rossi Navi was because of the hands-on approach of the Rossi brothers and their ongoing availability for consultation during his frequent visits to the yard.

"We are the shipyard directors, but we also work elbow-to-elbow with the people on the shop floor and we've been the owner's direct point of contact throughout the build," Riccardo Rossi pointed out. "The difference between us and other yards is that if problems need resolving or questions answered, we can provide an immediate response without having to go through the normal bureaucratic channels."

In addition to the 70m, there is also a 45m displacement motoryacht with exterior lines by Spadolini in build at Rossi Navi's second shed in Viareggio, and work on the hull of a 46m designed by Frank Mulder (this time with a Spadolini interior) is well underway in Pisa. The 45m project, due to launch in early 2012, is reported on in more depth in Q6



*Top: 45m Ketos concept; above: 46m Mulder design in build.  
Below: 45m Spadolini design in build; bottom: 46m Classic concept.*





*Clockwise, from top left: new Rossi Navi facility in Pisa; hand tools for working metal; scenes from the engineering workshop; the newest of their two sites in Viareggio; and Polo Nautico HQ.*

of *SuperyachtDesign* and represents an innovative blending of the kind of superstructure styling associated with a fast planing yacht on top of a steel displacement hull.

The Spadolini studio has also penned the lines of a new 46m Classic based on the Mulder platform and the yard itself has developed a striking 55m evolution of *South* launched in 2008. Rossi Navi is also entering the world of fast semi-displacement yachts – and possibly challenging one or two of its neighbours in Viareggio – with its racy 45m *Ketos*, an all-aluminium concept capable of 25 knots with aggressive exterior lines and contemporary interiors by Enrico Gobbi of Team 4 Design.

While many yards see semi-custom production as the best commercial option, Rossi Navi is focusing on full-custom yachts in the belief that today's increasingly fickle and demanding owners expect an evermore bespoke product.

"The market has changed and margins are smaller, but owners want more customisation at less cost," confirmed Claudio Rossi. "With more shipyards than clients, they also

know they can always close a deal elsewhere. Given these conditions, we rely on quality and flexibility by drawing on our in-house engineering and metalworking skills to provide custom solutions at less cost than our competitors who depend on outsourcing. In a sense, we've taken a step backwards, as shipyards used to do everything themselves before subcontracting became part of a more industrialised process in the 1970s. This is our strength as yacht builders, because we can give clients exactly what they want – in fact, we can often give them a choice to choose from."

Just four years ago, at least 75 per cent of Rossi Navi's production was for third parties. Today, that figure is less than ten per cent and the idea is to gradually phase it out entirely. It would seem the company's transformation from behind-the-scenes subcontractor to fully fledged superyacht builder is almost complete. ■

Images by Justin Ratcliffe and Rossi Navi

To comment on this article, email [issue122@synfo.com](mailto:issue122@synfo.com) with subject: Rossi Navi

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## THREE ROSSI NAVI NEW BUILDS: SHORT SPECS

### FR.025

**LOA**

46.35m

**Max beam**

9m

**Max draught**

2.8m

**Main engines output at 1,800rpm**

2 x 970kW (1,300bhp)

**Top speed**

16 knots

**Cruising speed (half load)**

14.5 knots

**Range @ 12 knots**

4,500nm

**Exterior design**

Frank Mulder Design

**Interior design**

Studio Spadolini

**Classification**

Lloyd's + RINA

### FR.020

**LOA**

70m

**Max beam**

13.2m

**Max draught**

3.20m

**Main engines output at 1,900rpm**

2 x 2,525kW (2 x 3,424bhp)

**Top speed**

17.5 knots

**Cruising speed (half load)**

15 knots

**Range @ 12 knots**

5,000nm

**Interior Design**

Salvagni Architetti

**Exterior Design**

Design Studio Spadolini

**Classification**

Lloyd's (MCA compliant)

### FR.024

**LOA**

45m

**Max beam**

9m

**Max draught**

2.6m

**Main engines output at 1,835rpm**

2 x 956kW (2 x 1,300bhp)

**Top speed**

16 knots

**Cruising speed (half load)**

15 knots

**Range @ 10 knots**

4,500nm

**Exterior design**

Studio Spadolini

**Classification**

RINA pleasure vessel + GREEN

PLUS