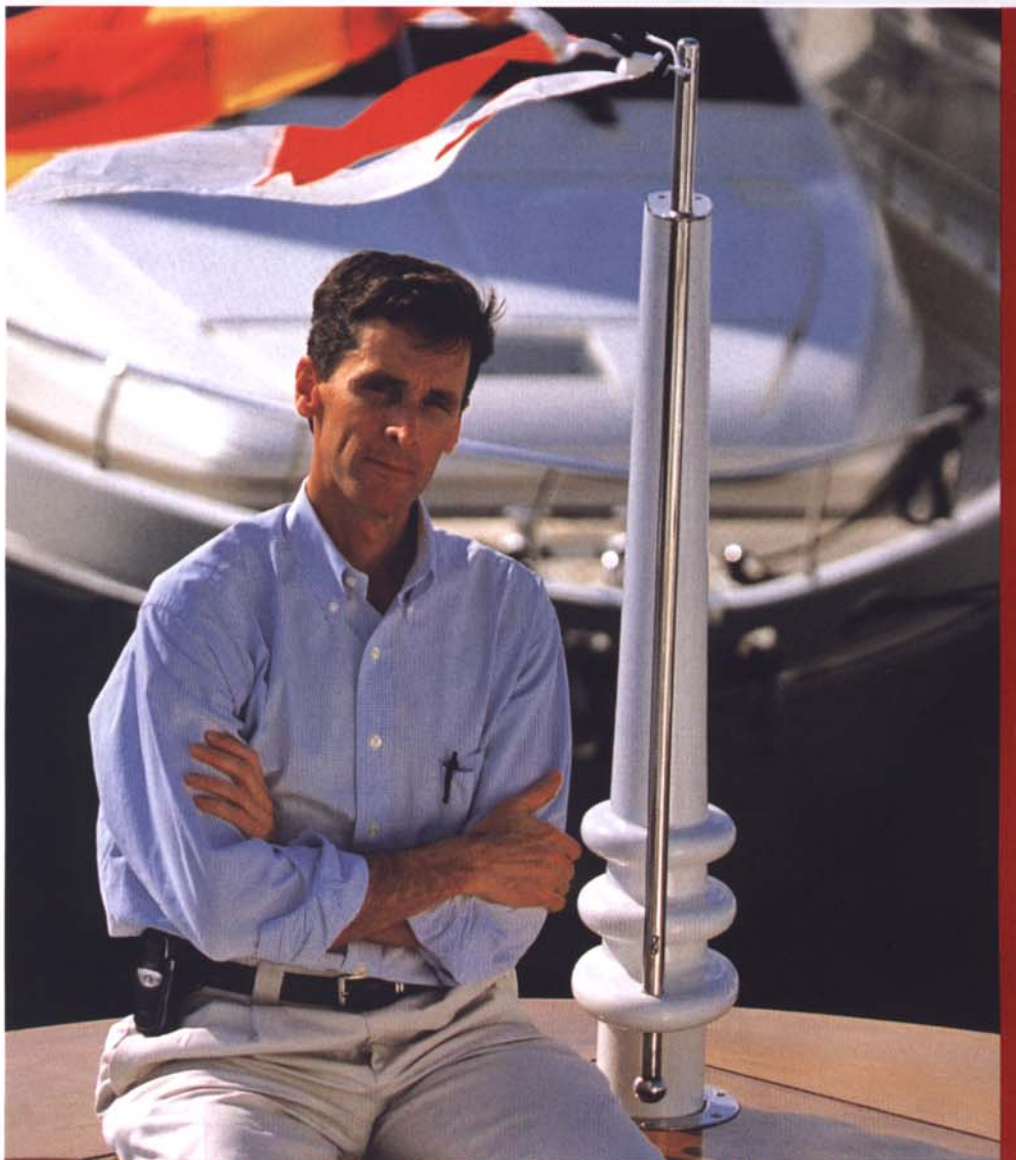


YACHTS

ADDICTED TO THE SEA



DESIGNER

DESIGNER WARD SETZER

STORY JAMIE WELCH PHOTOS JEROME KELAGOPIAN & SDG

DESIGNER WARD SETZER'S LIFELONG LOVE OF ART, BOATS AND THE SEA, COUPLED WITH HIS BACKGROUND IN INDUSTRIAL DESIGN AND NAVAL ARCHITECTURE—AS WELL AS OCEANOGRAPHY AND MARINE BIOLOGY—HAS MADE HIM A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL SUPERYACHT DESIGNER.

In the Carolina HQ
(L to R): Receptionist
Shelly Peterson,
Ward Setzer with
naval architects
Kevin Burns and
Andrew Major



A FANATIC FOR DETAILS, HE ANALYZES

Setzer's obsessive, critical eye for form and function (Setzer jokingly calls it his "sickness") has propelled him into the ranks of the world's most sought-after yacht designers. Recent design awards from the International Superyacht Society and a portfolio of projects with several of the industry's leading shipyards underscore Setzer's reputation for seaworthy vessels of quality and prestige.

Born in Virginia in 1960, Ward moved at a young age to an island in South Carolina, and when he was 9 his parents bought him a double-ended skiff. It was on that leaky little boat he set off in search of unobstructed adventure in the nearby marshes. Ward also was a self-taught artist, and grew up creating works the old-fashioned way: drawing with ink on Mylar, and painting in watercolor using long and precise brush strokes. While Ward was in junior high the Setzers moved to a lake in North Carolina, where the future designer quickly met a group of boat-loving friends who spent their time fixing up abandoned boats at the water's edge.

"We'd convert sailing skiffs into motor boats, and we'd attach masts to motor boats," he remembers. "We tinkered with them late into the evening before launching them on the lake the following day. The lake wasn't that big, which made me even more fascinated with bigger bodies of water—like the Pacific Ocean."

Ward satiated that fascination soon enough. While Setzer was in High School he traveled to Ecuador on a summer-

The award-winning 84'
Lyman-Morse Acadia



EVERY THREE-DIMENSIONAL OBJECT HE SEES.

long marine biology trip during which he organized an ambitious conservation project. It was a lot of responsibility for a young man, but it was only the beginning for the intrepid young designer. While in Ecuador, he spent his free time scuba diving and surfing, which would become lifelong passions—he still names all of his boat designs after famous surfing grounds throughout the world.

Ward studied environmental design and architecture at North Carolina State University, where he continued surfing and diving. His time spent on the water helped him form what he calls a holistic approach to design and an insatiable desire to explore and experiment.

After graduating he went to the Maine Maritime Academy and in 1983 landed his first naval architecture job at a shipyard, LADD Marine in Maryland, where he lived on a 1930s-vintage Trumpy while designing 12-meter sailing yachts that were built in the Far East.

"I would draw sailboats during the day, and at night I spent my free time drawing large motor yachts," he says. "I worked at LADD for two years and built a portfolio of about 130 designs, which I showed to all of the top yacht designers in the U.S. I received several job offers, but I decided to take a position in Jack Hargrave's office, even though a lot of people told me he was really tough to work for. I immediately started working on the 148-footer *Calliope*, which was Jack's boat. That was pretty exciting."

A 116' classic
fantail design on
the drawing board



After two years working under the tutelage of Hargrave, Ward went to Hatteras Yachts where—even though he was just 28 years old—he became one of the top managers in the custom yacht division at the huge North Carolina yard. “Most of the 100 guys on the production line were highly experienced and old enough to be my father, which was a bit intimidating,” Ward said. “I knew that to earn their respect I had to go down there and prove to them I knew what I was doing. So that’s what I did. I moved my office to the floor, rolled up my sleeves and worked alongside them every day. The biggest mistake a designer can make is not building boats with his own hands. In my opinion, a designer who can’t do it all himself is cheating, because it’s a waste of time to design something that can’t be built.”

Ward spent seven years at Hatteras before striking out on his own, creating the Setzer Design Group based in North Carolina. Their impressive portfolio includes large tri-decks such as the 150' *Trinity Bellini*, 135' *Sovereign Lady* and the 2004 launches 138' *Status Quo* and 130' *Northern Magic*. Raised pilothouse designs include the 118' *Intermarine Savannah* and a 101' *Sovereign* built in Canada. Ward’s exploration yacht designs include the 115' *McMullen & Wing Surprise*, which earned him a Superyacht Society Design Award in 2001 for best power motoryacht between 105' and 141'. At Lyman



Recent launches
(clockwise from top
left): 115' McMullen
& Wing Surprise,
138' Richmond
Status Quo and,
most recently, 152'
Northern Opus





Setzer was obsessed with every detail of the 130' Northern Magic (top left and right) and won an award for Surprise's interior (bottom right)

Morse Boatyard in Maine, Ward designed the beautiful 78' *Magpie*, 84' *Acadia* and 82' *Wombat*, which was launched last year. The 78' *Magpie* won the 2003 Superyacht Society Design Award for best motoryacht under 105' and in 2004 the 84' *Acadia* won Setzer an award for its interior.

Setzer's latest design is the 152' *Opus*, the largest project ever produced by Northern Marine. Launched in March 2005, *Opus* is constructed of infused fiberglass, is built to full ABS rules and is MCA compliant.

Although Ward is designing lots of large motoryachts these days—several in the 180' range—one of his favorite projects is a line of small picnic-style commuter boats, which are timeless and geared toward getting people on the water as easily and comfortably as possible. The Setzer Design Group continues to create classic modern yachts that honor the past while keeping an eye toward the future.

Personally, Setzer is currently building a 17' mahogany fishing and surfing support boat with—of course—his own hands. It will be launched later this spring, and he admits the woodwork has been half the fun. Setzer has built boats, surfboards, sports equipment, furniture, and homes. He also is a fan of classic steam powered yachts of the 1920s and 30s; automobile and aviation design of the past 20 years; and the lifelong work of Leonardo DaVinci.

An artist, craftsman, inventor, designer, engineer, boat builder, a lover of the sea and a family man with two teenage sons, Setzer has found his calling in the yachting industry. His healthy obsession for detail and a passionate, aesthetic sensibility has made the Setzer name synonymous with quality, integrity and timeless style. ▣

Contact: Setzer Design Group, 590 New Waverly Place, Suite 210, Cary, North Carolina, 27511

Tel: +1 919-859-7014 Fax: +1 919-859-7015 Web: setzerdesign.com Email: setzerdesign@mindspring.com