

YYachts Y8

FAST FASHION

German shipyard YYachts is one of the rising stars in the luxury performance sailboat industry, and its evolved Y8 design is a perfect example of founder Michael Schmidt's keep-it-simple philosophy.

Pioneering race-boat builder, international yacht broker, Admiral's Cup-winning skipper and helmsman, creator of the big yachting brand Hanse and then founder of the award-winning YYachts shipyard,

Michael Schmidt is one of the sailing world's great all-rounders with several careers' worth of experience packed into his five decades at the cutting edge of marine industry innovation.

But why on earth did he go back to the hard graft of establishing a new shipyard when he could be enjoying a well-earned and comfortable retirement instead? "Well, a few things came together," starts Schmidt. "If, like me, you've sailed all your life – virtually since birth – and then built thousands of sailing yachts, you have a certain wealth of experience.

"You have an idea," he continues, "of how a yacht should sail, what a good interior should look like, and how the technology should work. When I had time a few years ago, and was looking for a boat for myself, there was nothing that came close to satisfying me. So, I started to have a yacht built according to my ideas – Lorenzo Argento and Sir David Chipperfield designed the 80-footer *Cool Breeze* with me."

Schmidt's vision created a beautiful performance cruiser that turned heads wherever she sailed. But how did that one-off custom-build project escalate into the creation and launch of a whole new shipyard? "That came a little later," he explains.

"When I sailed *Cool Breeze*, the yacht attracted quite a lot of attention from owners and interested prospects. So, my idea of light, easy-to-sail, reduced yet luxurious yachts seemed to appeal not just to me."

Requests came in for a sister ship, and Schmidt realised he had a business. In 2016, he founded YYachts in Greifswald, Germany, and that core concept of reduced yet luxurious – or, just keep it simple – became the founding principles of the YYachts brand. At a time when most of the marine industry is so strongly focused on doing the exact opposite – adding a luxury dimension to yachting by installing ever-more complex and sophisticated systems – what does Schmidt mean by reduced? "There's a quote attributed to several famous thinkers – 'I'm writing you a long letter because I didn't have time to write a short one,'" he quips. "A yacht has to be operated intuitively, so you have to rethink and simplify a lot of details, which costs time and energy."

A good example of overcomplicating things, he says, is the current fashion for equipping





AT A GLANCE

23.99 m

Overall length

6.58 m

Beam

38.50 t

Displacement (lightship)

325 m²

Upwind sail area

At YYachts, we asked ourselves these questions and many more. We avoid a high level of complexity, and thus vulnerabilities, and high maintenance costs. That's what I understand by reduction.

large yachts' galleys with induction hobs and electric fan ovens. "Why does electric cooking have to be used on a sailing yacht?" Schmidt asks. "For that, I either need a shore connection or a generator. Why not cook with gas? It's safe and easy, and when the gas bottle is empty, you simply replace it."

This principle has always been popular among experienced sailors because it boosts the reliability of systems on board. From backstay deflectors to programmable logic controllers, Schmidt takes a pragmatic and seamanlike approach that's borne out of long experience, and favours robust, reliable simplicity over the diminishing returns of

adding extra functionality that isn't strictly necessary. "Why do all sails have to be adjustable in so many different ways? If I'm not a racing sailor, I don't need these features, which are also quite fragile," he says.

"And why do the electronics have to be completely networked and have so many potential sources of error? At YYachts, we asked ourselves these questions and many more. We avoid a high level of complexity, and thus vulnerabilities, and high maintenance costs. That's what I understand by reduction."

After *Cool Breeze*, individual Y8 follow-up orders and the launch of the (very successful) Y7 and Y9 models, YYachts developed a

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Anticipating both family cruising and chartering needs, Surge provided a vast open cockpit for uninhibited enjoyment by all aboard, while simultaneously optimising interior volumes.

modified 80-foot platform. For the new Y8, the first of which is called *Calabash*, the YYachts design and development team, which is based in Palma, Mallorca, cooperated with Surge Projects. The Mallorcan design studio, founded by naval architect Javier Jaudenes, has a knack for timelessly elegant designs but also has great experience designing fast yachts. Designs by Surge have won many trophies, and the studio has developed such interesting yachts as *Win Win* and the Baltic 68 Café Racer.

“Our design mission was crystal clear – to develop a vessel that seamlessly blends performance, comfort and ease of handling,” explains Jaudenes. “The significant challenge for Surge was to conceive an aesthetically pleasing vessel that’s capable of accommodating six distinct layouts while maintaining essential structural elements, all without compromising headroom.”

The exterior style follows the DNA of the yard’s successful predecessors. Anticipating both family cruising and chartering needs, Surge prioritised maximising the beam, providing a vast open cockpit for uninhibited enjoyment by all aboard, while simultaneously optimising interior volumes. They aimed for a lightship displacement of 40 tonnes with moderate stability, refining the hull’s shape based on findings from previous high-performance projects to ensure responsiveness within its operational envelope. Through exhaustive analysis, the hull lines were optimised to enhance performance, stability as well as manoeuvrability under sail.

The maximum beam of the Y8 extends aft to the transom, with flared topsides ensuring substantial hull stability. “Considering the operational profile, we opted for a rig with a moderate aspect ratio, optimising the foretriangle base dimension to ensure optimal driving forces for the jib, particularly during jib reaching,” says Jaudenes. “The sail plan strikes a balance between delivering substantial driving forces and mitigating heeling moments, which means reefing isn’t required until wind speeds of 18 knots.”

The new Y8 also offers YYachts’ usual innovative elements, such as the transverse garage in the stern, the self-tacking jib,

the separate crew access in the cockpit, and the flat deckhouse with optimally placed windows that conveniently prevent the yacht from heating up too much.

The interior volume of the yacht has also increased in the new platform, coming in at 20 percent larger than its predecessor. This results in many different layout options – the owner’s suite, including a separate saloon, can be located either in the bow or stern with direct access to the cockpit. The galley can be installed open or closed, and three or four guest cabins can be specified.

“For me, this new Y8 is a very special design,” says Schmidt. “After all, I founded the shipyard with the first Y8. In between, there were quite a few orders, but yachting is always evolving due to new building materials, different rigs and the regatta scene – this is what inspires us at YYachts to continually develop new products.”

An experienced YYachts owner has commissioned renowned architect and designer David Thulstrup to design the interior of the first new Y8. Thulstrup’s refined and holistic approach to architecture,



Opposite: The business end of helm and sail controls is separate from the cockpit.

Below: Twin folding dinettes and comfortable lounges make for a safe and social guest cockpit.

interiors and product design combines his Scandinavian heritage with a modern design language. His practice is grounded on the enduring Scandinavian values of honesty and humanism, with a particular emphasis on materiality. A central tenet is a concern for how people feel. By taking a holistic approach to each aspect of a project, Thulstrup creates spaces where people are comfortable and embraced by their surroundings.





This page: The new Y8's interior features less bulkheads than previous builds and, combined with architect and designer David Thulstrup's creative vision, strikes a stunning balance between modern Scandinavian style

and stunning clarity. The inviting main saloon is flooded with light; the master suite is located forward and offers its own saloon. The galley is not only beautifully designed, it is also functional and eschews the move to induction hobs.

The look of the interior reflects exactly this philosophy and Thulstrup's approach. Warm beige, brown and wood tones create a cosy ambience that's both relaxing and elegant. A plank-like floor visually connects the exterior with the interior, while narrow flat hull ports and the windows of the flat deckhouse provide the interior with ample natural light.

Incidentally, the David Thulstrup version of the Y8 has fewer bulkheads

than all Y8 yachts previously delivered, making it possible to configure the spaces a bit differently. In this layout, the crew occupies an area in the stern, in front of which four guests can sleep in two ensuite cabins.

The heart of the layout is the saloon, which is divided into a lounge with big sofas on both sides and a dining area with a table for up to eight guests. The dining area can also be used as a meeting room, or even as a large office.

"This new Y8, which is based on her predecessors, is hull #8 from our Y8 series,"

Right: The Y8 features a simplified sailplan for easy sailing, including a self-tacking jib.

Schmidt explains, "The thinking is completely different from that of her sisterships – it's a different interpretation of the coachroof and the cockpit that was created by a design icon leader and a YYachts customer who sailed his Y7 for many years.

"This new Y8 also features different thinking for the interior," he concludes. "The owner loves interior space, and this yacht probably has a saloon bigger than a typical 90-footer, which is what he first wanted to build."

With the owner very happy with 10 feet less boat, the satisfaction that comes with evolving and augmenting the popular Y8 design – the boat that started it all – is perhaps the only explanation we need for why Schmidt chose to go back into yacht building instead of going into retirement. O.yyachts.de

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SPECIFICATIONS ➔



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YYachts Y8



1

SAIL PLAN

Designed to balance power and stability while offering simplicity for performance sailing and reaching. Self-tacking jib, plus gennaker and Code 0 for downwind fun.

2

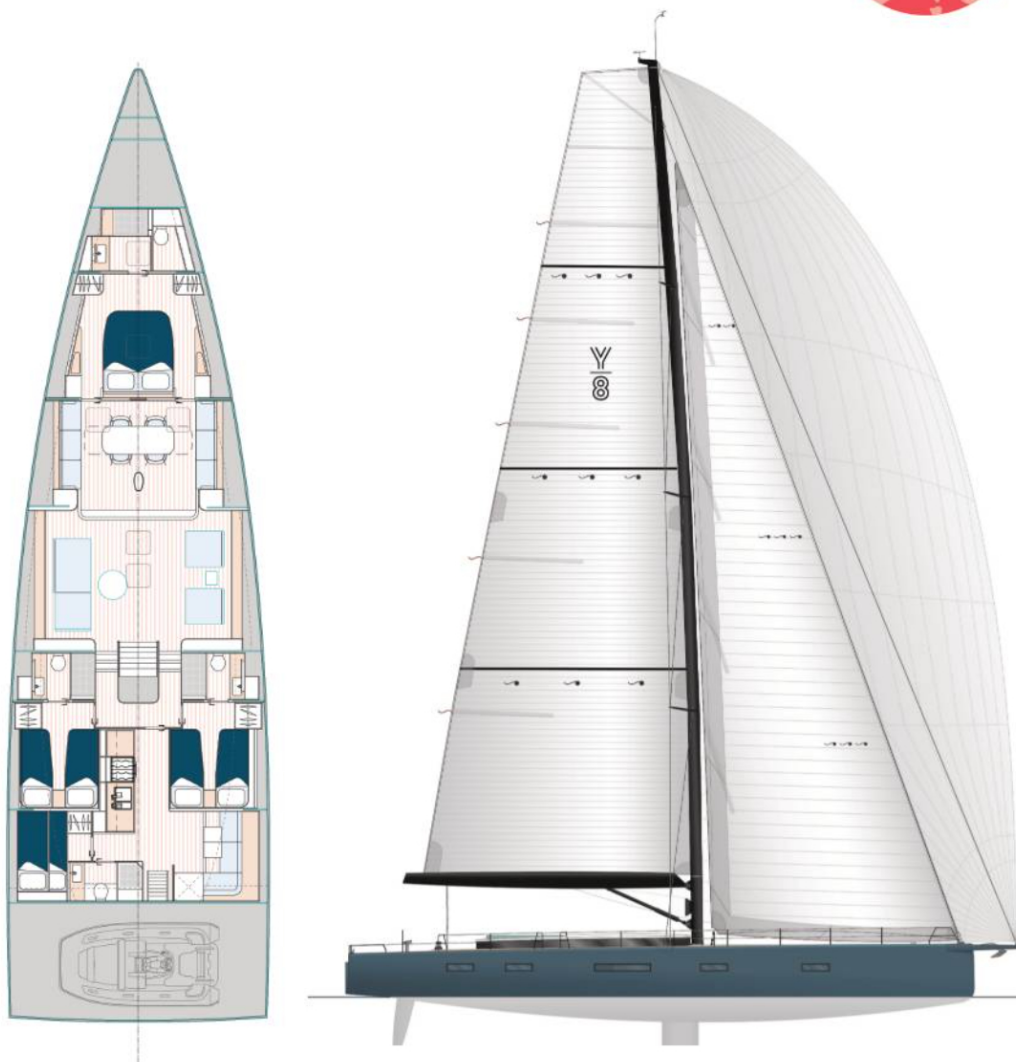
DECK PLAN

Helm and sail controls located aft gives a comfortable cockpit and decks with no trip hazards; also means crew can sail the yacht without imposing on guests. Aft transverse tender garage.

3

ACCOMMODATION

Various options for private or charter layouts; on the first, crew cabin aft, two aft guest cabins and owner suite forward with generous saloon and dining between.



SPECIFICATIONS

Builder	YYachts
Model	Y8
Country of build	Germany
Designer	Surge Projects – Javier Jaudenes
Naval architect	Surge Projects – Javier Jaudenes
Interior designer	David Thulstrup/YYachts Design Team
Year of build	2024
LOA (length overall)	23.99 metres
LWL (waterline length)	22.13 metres
Beam	6.58 metres
Draft	4.30 metres (fixed keel); 2.80 to 4.30 metres (telescopic keel)
Draft option	Shallow fixed draft 3.7 metres
Displacement (lightship)	approx 38.50 t
Ballast	12.9 t (fixed keel); 12.5 t (telescopic keel)
Sail area (main)	179 square metres
Sail area (self-tacking jib)	146 square metres
Sail area (Code 0)	245 square metres
Sail area (Gennaker)	517 square metres
Keel structure	Fixed or telescopic (owner's choice)

Mast	Axxon
Sails	Doyle
Boom	Axxon V Boom
Extras	Y on Watch system (remote control of yacht)
Classification	CE
Hull construction	Carbon composite with Corecell M-foam
Superstructure	Carbon composite with Corecell M-foam
Engines	Yanmar 4LV195
Output	143 kilowatts
Fuel capacity	1,600 litres
Freshwater capacity	1,600 litres
Blackwater capacity	320 litres
Generators (main)	Fischer Panda
Gen-set size	230 volt/50 hertz; 6.4 kilowatts
Winches	Harken
Owner	Full-beam king berth with ensuite
Guest berths	2 x twin with ensuite
Crew	1 x twin with ensuite
Price (base)	€3.960 million

23.99 m

Length

4.30 m

Draft (fixed keel)

Axxon

Mast

696 m²

Downwind sail area

**Yanmar
4LV195**

Engines

**Surge
Projects**

Designer