

QUOBUS MODULAR SHELVING 2015/2021

TASCHEN VERSION
Chemically blackened steel, Corian
GALERIE KREO VERSION
Vitreous enameled steel, brass



When TASCHEN asked Newson to come up with a general interior concept for its Milan bookshop, he decided that rather than design the whole interior, he would approach the project from a product design perspective. "The fundamental goal is to display books, so I tasked myself with that primary function. Most importantly, it needed to accommodate the infinite variety of TASCHEN book sizes. That was the most challenging aspect." The shelving also needed to be completely adaptable to any

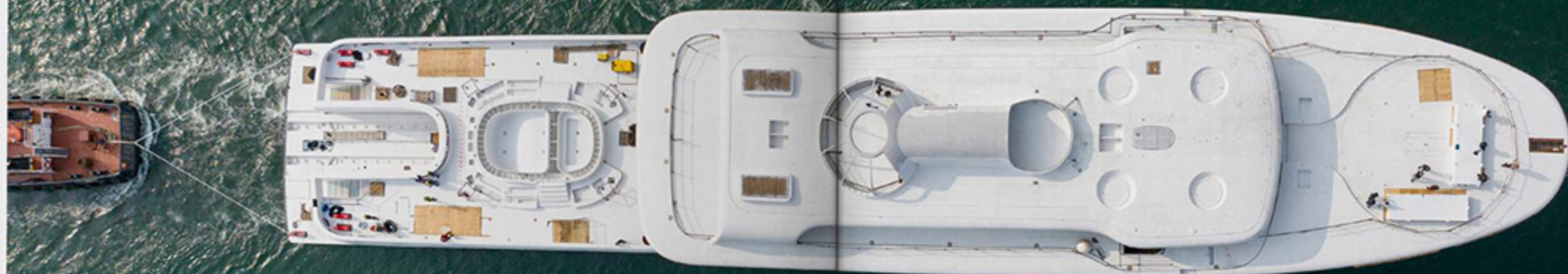
interior space, and to be easily disassembled for temporary installations. Newson's modular system, composed of stackable open rectangles and drawer units, cleverly addressed all of the project's needs. Newson chose to chemically blacken the steel and enhance its rigidity with channels that also bring a hint of industrial character to the units. He also designed optional yellow Corian inserts to provide housing for optional doors and to add a pop of color.

In 2021, Newson had the opportunity to adapt this clever concept for a limited design run with Galerie Kreo in Paris. For these shelves, now named Quobus, he selected three cube sizes, available in various configurations, and chose to finish them in vitreous enamel in a range of five colors. The screws used to fasten the cubes together look like brass buttons and give the Quobus a look at once industrial and luxe.



NAUSICAÄ MEGAYACHT

from newson



During the Solaris project, Newson was commissioned to design another megayacht from head to toe. The client, Yusaku Maezawa, a Japanese entrepreneur and art collector, gave Newson complete freedom to dictate the layout and design. "Maezawa was a dream client," Newson says. "This is the first boat of its kind that he's commissioned, so you could say he sort of dived in at the deep end. He has extremely specific interests, but from a nautical side he was relatively open." Maezawa asked Newson to include a driving/pedal, a submersible, a sport fishing boat, a gallery to display art, and a space to sing karaoke, with a few other requirements like a helipad. "My concept was to create something big but relatively low, a bit like

an aircraft carrier, long, wide, and with a low center of gravity. I didn't want to follow typical 'wedding cake' proportions, which was a luxury in itself because the architecture of most boats is dictated by what they have to accommodate, but this one is at least one deck lower." Indeed, Newson took the terrestrial-leaning mindset applied to Solaris to the point that an entire deck was excised from the explorer typology on which the ship is based. "It has always struck me as odd, trying to cram in an extra floor when you could have three beautiful floors. That is the prevailing mindset, like that of a frugal real estate developer."

Nausicaä is remarkable at first glance for its unusual silhouette, with windows wrapping around

the entire bow, a squarish plan, and a subtle and purposeful military look. Because the glazed bow is cantilevered over the water, it allows for spectacular views. ("I don't know of another boat that allows you to stand at the front and be literally suspended over the water," he says.) The top decks of yachts like these are typically reserved for helipads, utility equipment, and so forth, and are of little interest to the owner, but Newson decided to upend tradition a bit with Nausicaä. "In my mind, the top and the front are the most fun places to go. On all boats, those areas are high and they sway the most, but this boat has the biggest deployable stabilizers in the world and they keep the boat incredibly still when stationary." On the very top of the boat,

between the satellites and the funnels, Newson placed an owner's study and private terrace accessible directly from the owner's stateroom. Newson came up with the idea for the latter, which he calls the "skydome," and its glossy, bubble-like form does a lovely job of adding a sensual touch to such a formidable vessel.

Along with all of the typical amenities of a megayacht such as a pool, sauna, gym, beauty salon, etc., Newson designed for Nausicaä a nearly six-meter-high, full-beam (i.e., full width from side to side) atrium in the center of the gallery that can accommodate a very large sculpture; a golf simulator; a fishing boat with sleeping quarters for overnight trips; a tender garage that doubles as a fish

prep station for sashimi; and a submersible with an ellipsoid viewing enclosure that can comfortably seat eight and reach a depth of 100 meters (328 feet). As of this writing, Nausicaä is in construction at the Lürssen shipbuilding company in Bremen, Germany—"the Rolls Royce of shipyards for big yachts of this size"—and is expected to be completed by 2025.

The esoteric experience of such a project as this or Solaris is not lost on Newson. "It appeals to every one of my obsessive qualities. If you wonder why I do these boats, it's because it satisfies every one of the misgivings I've ever had about conventional architecture. What I dislike about architecture is that every building is a prototype that you don't

have an opportunity to perfect, and you're reliant on so many variables you can't control, starting with the site itself, not to mention the likelihood of having to work with unknown resources in different geographical and cultural locations. It's an exercise in mitigating compromise. With a yacht, it's made in a controlled environment that guarantees consistency and quality." In fact, while ownership of a yacht is reserved for a rarified few, the building of them provides livelihoods for an entire industry of highly skilled tradespeople, whose skills would be otherwise lost forever. "It's architecture built by watchmakers. It really is that level."

DESIGN FESTIVAL PAVILION 2009

LONDON
Steel and enamel

1 Newson inspecting the assembly in front of the Royal Festival Hall.



For its 2009 edition, the London Design Festival invited Newson to design an exterior object or large sculpture to be sold at auction after the festival. Newson was given the choice among a selection of large corporate sponsors who were involved in the production of usable materials. He chose the sponsor ArcelorMittal, the world's largest steel manufacturer, "because steel seemed like a somewhat forgotten and unsexy material, but one which I have a particular affinity to because I love knives and blades and find it more beautiful than gold when used in the right way." Typically, architects, rather than designers, are invited to do this type of project (Shigeru Ban was also commissioned); therefore, Newson didn't want to design a sculpture, "a thing that sits there and does nothing—it

had to be on an architectural scale, designed to be built in a large open space [in front of the Royal Festival Hall] with a big physical presence." His idea was to make a mushroom-shaped pavilion. "We had very particular production constraints for a whole lot of reasons, including the time frame, which was very short. Essentially, I came up with the idea of defining the shape and then subdividing it into semi-hexagonal shapes. That had to be done creating a certain level of repetition to make a circular form. To a large degree, logic and geometry dictated how it was going to be built. I dictated the shape, and then imposed the geometry on top of it. The object needed to be manufactured from two-dimensional panels, so it was a question of creating a complex shape from two-dimensional forms."

One of the problems with steel is that it corrodes in an outdoor setting, which was an obvious problem that had to be solved. Newson wanted to avoid the easiest solution—painting the steel—and therefore chose to enamel it. He had always been interested in enamel, and had recently worked with it for SMEG; enamel, commonly used for street signs, is durable and suitable for outdoor use. "And at the end of the day, I was looking for a fantastic excuse to use enamel. I chose muddy industrial RAL colors: celadon green, pale blue, and mauve." During the festival, the pavilion provided people shelter from the rain, therefore fulfilling its role as an architectural structure.

TOKYO TOILET 2023

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