

WORLDLY GOODS

A SOURCEBOOK TO THE UNIQUE AND EXTRAORDINARY

Tried & tested

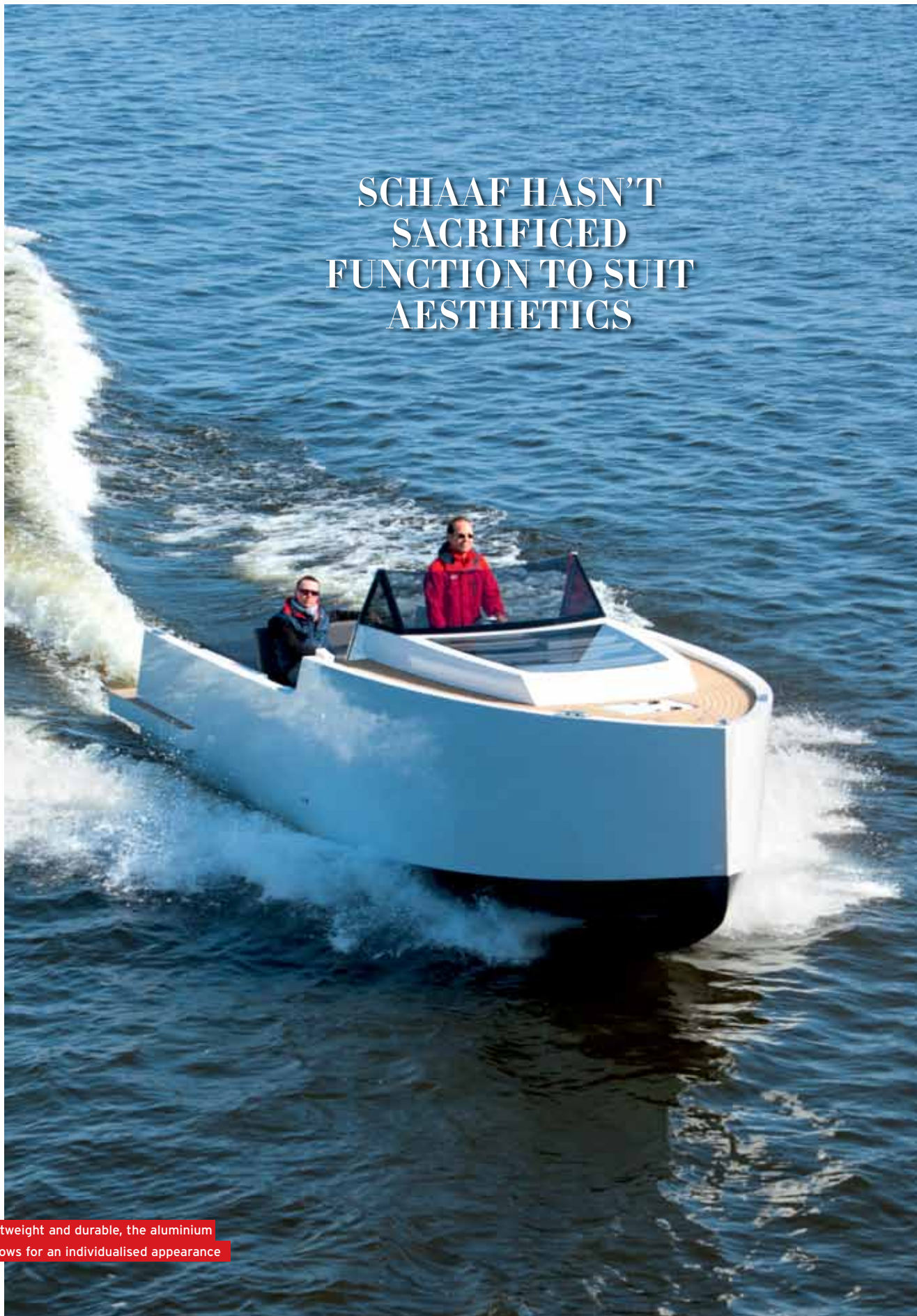
Love me TENDER

Moving beyond the synthetic fibreglass of everyday tenders, one German go-getter is putting an aluminium sheen on the world of water sports.
WILL CADE reports

Standing at the centred steering console, Joerg Schaaf eases the throttle forward, and the 9.5m Tender 31 perches up like a thoroughbred stallion on the waters around Potsdam – a regal and elegant gesture for the other boaters who, judging by their tilted glances, have never seen a sleek aluminium hull quite like this on their sleepy waterways. “But it’s not just chic; it has to work as well,” says Schaaf, owner of Dresden-based **Schaaf Bootsmanufaktur**, both encapsulating his nautical pursuits and hinting at the birth of the Tender 31 itself.

The Tender 31's
flexiteek deck

SCHAAF HASN'T
SACRIFICED
FUNCTION TO SUIT
AESTHETICS



Lightweight and durable, the aluminium hull allows for an individualised appearance

KERSTIN ZILLMER

His eponymous company, although grounded on a sturdy German pragmatism, saw its first inklings of an incarnation on the Brazilian isle of Floripa. For Schaaf, what began almost a decade ago as a winter vacation on the sunny sands of South America progressively grew into a yearly six-month retreat from the harsh German winters. "I had a real estate company and had to work the whole summer so I could go away again in the winter," he says. "And then you stand at the airport and think, 'Oh, man, I can't get away from this company.' But when you're gone for a week, and you don't get any more emails, and no one's calling on the phone, then you start to let go, and everything's good. Then you can finally get a clear head."

After a glance at the Tender 31's modern minimalism, one could argue that Schaaf's clear head was quickly filled with the design and architectural influences of his annually adopted Brazil, but he begs to differ. "The drawings, the first attempts at sketches, and how you could organise everything, I had all that in my head there, but the details, the cockpit here, that all came afterwards," he says, going on to commend the welcome Floripa gave him while stressing that, for once, he had a moment's pause to think. "May of last year, that was when we really made the design," he says, referring to his team of four in Dresden.

Since then, Schaaf has gone from concept to prototype all the way to production – with five contracts signed and two boats completed – a remarkable pace for a start-up shipbuilder. But don't take their speed and efficiency as a sign of cookie-cutter products. Just the opposite. From the very start, Schaaf prefers and encourages customers to bring their own wishes to the drawing board.

"He can put it all on the table," he says. "I'll try to implement them, so that he has the feeling that the boat is truly being made just for him." The whole process usually takes six months, and after the initial design and first three months of fabrication, Schaaf invites clients to visit the shipyard in Dresden, either

in person or virtually through a webcam communiqué, to witness their boat taking shape during the final months.

Schaaf doesn't just honour his client's hands-on approach in the name of good business; he also identifies

with the attribute personally. First tasting the temptations of the sea as a sailor, he later came to appreciate the value and appeal of motorboats, yet without the technical background to construct them himself. "That I had to research. It was just some homework," he says with a smile, reminiscing at first and then systematically recounting the different aspects of designing and building a tender: which details he would furnish himself, which bits of technology would only need to be installed (like the engine or electronics). Looking over the finepoints of the craft in person, one sees how attention to detail can come to fruition in the most marvellous of ways: the wood panelling in the cabin below deck – one of Schaaf's personal favourites – has been cut to perfectly match the flow of wood grain from the pantry all the way across to the back wall.

Even so, Schaaf hasn't sacrificed any of the tender's function to suit its aesthetics. For a boat of its size, coastal cruising would usually cover the wishes of most casual customers. But when Schaaf approached the renowned classification society Germanischer Lloyd, he elected to calibrate the Tender 31 for a Class B ranking instead, which makes it suitable for sporting around on the open sea. "You could take this boat from island to island in the Balearics, if you wanted, and it holds

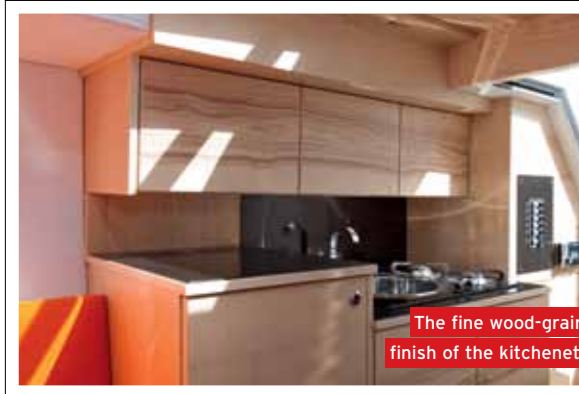
400 litres of fuel," he notes. "That'll bring you a good way." After all, long trips seem to be encoded in the tender's DNA, woven together somewhere between Brazil and Germany to create the ideal balance between form and function. schaaf-boats.com ■



The symmetric centre steering console



A panoramic roof affords an abundance of sunlight, or starlight, for the cabin below deck



The fine wood-grain finish of the kitchenette

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