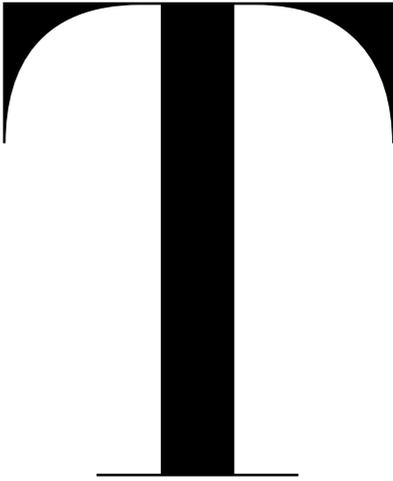


A YACHT FOR THE AGES

Sycara IV

Looking every bit the authentic classic cruiser, *Sycara IV*, winner of a World Yacht Trophy for Best Design, sets a new standard for her owners and Burger Boat Company alike. Story Diane M. Byrne Photos Neil Rabinowitz





The 151' *Sycara IV* is the embodiment of a decades-long dream. Ray Catena and his wife Elsie have commissioned and cruised aboard three previous megayachts, each incorporating plenty of personal elements, but Catena has a real passion for 1930s-style cruisers, with their graceful fantails and proud bowsprits—ones like *Corsair IV*, launched by Bath Iron Works in Maine in 1930 and owned by the famous financier J.P. Morgan. He's also longed to explore inland and coastal American waters with his family aboard such a yacht.

Stepping aboard *Sycara IV* is akin to stepping back into history. From her funnels to her wood-clad house, she's achingly authentic. In fact, if it weren't for the communications and navigation instruments at her helm or other contemporary conveniences, you'd be hard pressed to know you're on a new yacht. And therein lies her real appeal: *Sycara IV* deftly blends elements of a classic gentleman's yacht with today's engineering and systems. Besides envisioning how such a yacht should look, Catena had a specific vision for where she should come to fruition: "I wanted to build in America if I could," he says, with his shipyard of choice eventually being Burger Boat Company. The decision was in large part due to the yard's history, which dates back to the 1860s. Burger launched a fair share of classic styles, both power and sail, in the early part of the last century and has, since that time, shown interest and ability in taking on challenges. In fact, it built the country's first all-welded-steel auxiliary ketch, an 81-footer christened *Tamaris*, in 1938. In 1977 Burger made history again by delivering the country's largest all-aluminum yacht at the time, the 125' *Arara III*.

Steve Narkawicz, the owners' representative and project manager, says there was "a tremendous number of challenges" involved in balancing what the owners wanted and what the design would actually allow. In each case, he says, the Burger team worked closely with the Catenas and him to ensure everyone's satisfaction.

The meticulous décor, featuring the design work of Ken Freivokh, draws inspiration from the 1930s









The compact engine room is one such example. Yachts of the 1930s weren't as beamy as their modern contemporaries are. "A narrower beam was needed for the authenticity of the style," Catena says, "but we still needed equipment to allow world travel." In addition, the hull—designed by Bruce King, who's renowned for sailing yachts—tapers down to the keel. The reason: Catena wanted the yacht to have a wake of less than one foot while cruising and be able to cut through the water with minimal resistance. Tank tests performed at Stevens Institute in Hoboken, New Jersey, and sea trials bore out the design's efficiency. In August, a few short weeks after her first taste of water, *Sycara IV* hit a 12-knot cruise with a wake equivalent to what Narkawicz describes as "a ripple on the water" and averaged close to the 27-gph fuel-consumption goal at that speed with both gensets running. Even though the engine room had to be smaller due to the lesser amount of available space, Narkawicz says all of the modern equipment, including at-anchor stabilizers and an "extensive exhaust system" to keep soot emissions low, is accessible for maintenance.

Another challenge came during a visit Catena made to Burger after construction began. In walking through the yacht, he stood inside the wheelhouse and, looking toward the signature high bow, felt that visibility was compromised. Yachts of the 1930s featured swept-up sheer, and aboard *Sycara IV*, you can feel the rising slope of the foredeck as you approach the bow. To fix the problem, Burger's in-house design team determined that the wheelhouse floor could be raised by about six inches. Appropriate additional modifications were made to ensure proper balance for engineering and aesthetics.

Engineering and aesthetic changes came into play in the crew and guest areas, too. Narkawicz and Ron Cleveringa, Burger's vice president of sales and marketing, both point to how important it was for the crew area to reflect the same level of finish as the guest areas and to be as comfortable as those staterooms. The crew's quarters, feature the classic combination of mahogany and white panels. (It's worth noting that Catena has a good relationship with his crew: Narkawicz has known him and his wife for 18 years, having worked as the engineer on their 100' Oceanfast *Mercedes*, then serving as the project manager for the 185' *Sycara III*, also built at Oceanfast. Catena valued his input during this build and describes his current crew, which includes Graham Stoner and Paige Miles as "excellent.")

Deco-inspired opening portholes bring light and fresh air into the guest staterooms; the square windows in the master have a drop-down design

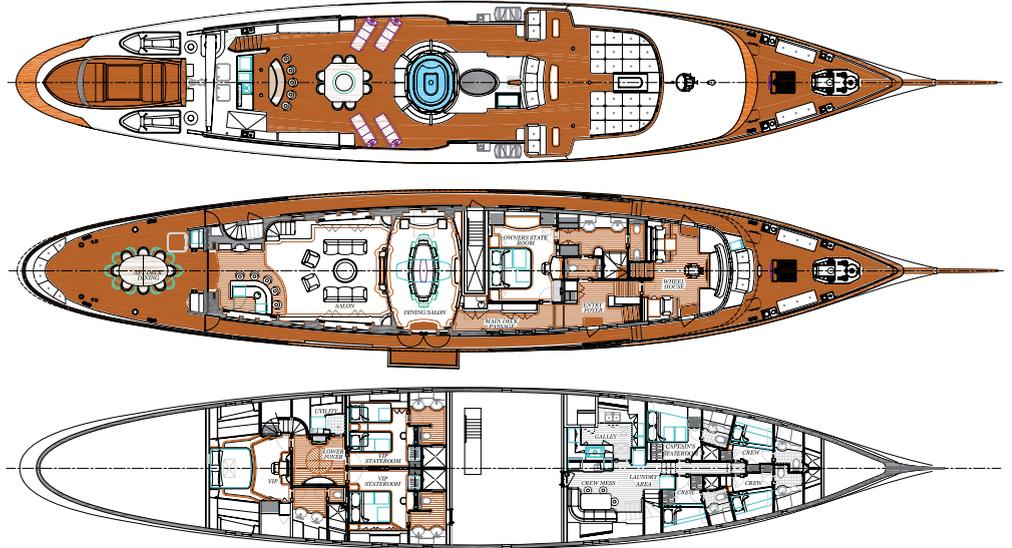
**YOU CAN GET ONBOARD WITH A TUXEDO OR
A BATHING SUIT AND FEEL VERY COMFORTABLE**

Sycara IV

LOA: 151' 03"
 BEAM: 26' 06"
 DRAFT (FULL LOAD): 6' 00"
 DISPLACEMENT: 180 LONG TONS
 MAIN ENGINES:
 2 x CAT C-18, C
 GENERATORS:
 2 x KOHLER, 80 kW, 60 Hz, 208 V
 THREE PHASE 1,800 RPM

CRUISE SPEED:
 13.0 KNOTS (APPROX.)
 MAX SPEED: 14.0 KNOTS (APPROX.)
 LONG RANGE CRUISE: 11.0 KNOTS
 RANGE: 1,100 NM
 @13 KNOTS
 RANGE AT LONG RANGE CRUISE:
 1,800 NM @ 9 KNOTS
 FUEL CAPACITY: 4,270 U.S. GAL.

FRESH WATER: 1,720 U.S. GAL.
 EXTERIOR STYLING:
 BURGER DESIGN TEAM
 NAVAL ARCHITECTURE:
 BRUCE KING
 BURGER DESIGN TEAM
 INTERIOR DESIGN:
 KEN FREIVOKH
 BURGER DESIGN TEAM



A classic fantail and the 24' restored classic Elco tender aft, and the hand-carved raised trail boards adorning the bow complete the authentic look





STEPPING ABOARD SYCARA IV IS AKIN TO STEPPING BACK INTO HISTORY. FROM HER FUNNELS TO HER WOOD-CLAD HOUSE, SHE'S ACHINGLY AUTHENTIC

The crew area's Art Deco style elements are in keeping with those found throughout the rest of *Sycara IV*, featuring the design work of Ken Freivokh. Given his studio's period-faithful efforts aboard the sailing yacht *Atlantide* and the tug-to-motoryacht conversion *St. Eval*, Freivokh was a natural choice. Teak and sycamore flows underfoot in some areas, paired with custom off-white carpeting, while madrona burl lines the walls and is inlaid with ebony. Even with elegant furnishings, artwork, and Lalique crystal squares inset into some walls, the yacht herself "is a piece of art," Catena says. But the design is not so opulent as to be off-putting. "You can get onboard with a tuxedo or a bathing suit and feel very comfortable," he says. You can also enjoy fresh breezes inside. You'd never know it to look at them, but all along the main deck, including in the owner's suite forward, the square windows are drop-down designs. There are also rounded opening ports in the three guest staterooms below decks (a VIP, double stateroom, and twin stateroom) and similar opening ports in each of the crew heads. All the ports are rimmed in stainless steel, in keeping with the Art Deco look.

Among the most compelling period elements, however, are the 14-foot-long trail boards adorning the bow. The boards feature raised, gold-leafed, carved leaves, sculpted nearly entirely by hand. It took Kenton Keadle, a member of Burger's in-house cabinetry shop, about 200 hours, by his own estimation, to make them from solid blocks of wood. "There are craftsmen, and then there are artists," Cleveringa says. "He's both."

Some of the other period exterior elements are worth gazing at a while longer, too. There's a steering station forward of the pilothouse windshield, with a beautifully carved wheel. (Forget

If it weren't for the modern navigation and communications equipment at the helm, you would not know you are on a new yacht



SYCARA IV DEFTLY BLENDS ELEMENTS OF A CLASSIC GENTLEMAN'S YACHT WITH TODAY'S ENGINEERING AND SYSTEMS

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BURGER BOAT COMPANY
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A narrow beam was necessary to create an authentic look but required adjustments

the fact that GPS, radar, and other electronics are onboard; a proper gentleman's yacht simply must have the exterior station.) Since wheelhouses of the day were made of wood, *Sycara IV's* wheelhouse is entirely clad in teak (though it is constructed of aluminum, in keeping with current building methods and classification society rules). The Catenas are thrilled with the period wood tables they commissioned from AJ Originals, a father-and-son shop in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The bowsprit and mast also appear to be wood, but they're actually constructed of carbon fiber, effectively faux painted to mimic mahogany. Cowl vents not only look authentic, some of them actually transfer airflow. And Catena, at the time of this interview, was actively looking for antique steam whistles for the stack supporting the mast. Sure, *Sycara IV* has a modern horn for signaling, but no fantail cruiser would be complete without that distinctive high-toned blast and burst of steam. The stack itself is also worth further consideration. If you're familiar with the Mississippi River and other inland waterways, you'll recall that they're spanned in places by low bridges—ones that *Sycara IV's* stack should prevent her from passing under. But to come to that conclusion would be to forget there's modern engineering in this yacht. The mast can come down, and the funnel can be removed. Narkawicz says this gives them the requisite 19'6" air draft to go from Lake Erie to the Hudson River. "It was made to do things other boats (this size) can't do," Catena explains. Days away from taking delivery, Catena was brimming with pride over the journeys he was about to take but more so over the people who "made this dream come true." He reflected on how "a lot of quality people" at Burger put "a lot of love" into his boat. It's not often you hear a yacht owner talk about craftspeople like that. Then again, it's not often that an owner like Ray Catena comes along. ●