

THE OWNER OF *DO IT NOW* WANTS TO ENJOY EVERY MINUTE OF EVERY DAY. THAT'S WHY SHE GOT THE YACHT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

BY DIANE M. BYRNE



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&

DECISIVE



LEFT: JIM RAYGROFF; RIGHT: SUKI FINNERY

Owner Jo Ellard and Horizon Yacht started with a wish list and a blank sheet of paper when designing her 98-footer.

“WE STARTED TALKING, AND I SAID, ‘I WANT THE BOAT.’”

That’s how Jo Ellard informed — surprised, really — the team at Horizon Yacht USA that she was ready not just to buy a bigger boat, but to build it.

It was the 2015 Horizon Yacht Owner Rendezvous in the Bahamas, and Ellard was there aboard her E76 motoryacht. She already knew the Horizon team well, having attended nearly all of the previous rendezvous and having purchased her boat, as a brokerage buy, in 2010. The fact that she’d owned the E76 for five years is why Roger Sowerbutts, director of Horizon Yacht USA, and Elise Moffitt, the U.S. marketing coordinator, were caught off guard by her statement. And little could they guess that the conversation would lead to the creation of an entirely new model, the Horizon E98.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, typifies how Ellard gets things done. If you harbor any doubt, take a hint from the name of Ellard’s E98: *Do It Now*.

In fact, everything about her boating life harkens back to that decree. About 40 years ago, she accompanied her husband, Bill, to a convention at Fort Lauderdale’s Pier Sixty-Six. While standing on their room’s balcony and admiring all the boats, he avowed that one day he’d own one, and soon bought a 33-foot Chris-Craft. Ellard promptly enrolled herself

in the U.S. Coast Guard’s boat-handling classes, plus she took the wheel every time they ventured out.

After a while, she says, “I wanted to enjoy, not run the boat,” so they stepped up to a 53-foot Hatteras motoryacht, followed by a 64-foot Hatteras wide-body motoryacht, both run by a captain. After 20 years (yes, 20) of cruising aboard that yacht, and just before Bill died seven years ago, Ellard says, he declared, “We need to get you another boat.”

Having never been boat shopping herself, Ellard did what she knew best. The same drive that led her to become a champion rider, trainer and breeder of cutting horses (which separate cattle from a herd) led her to focus on exactly what she wanted, mainly an open flybridge and three good-size staterooms. She looked at 15 boats from five builders, unable to find the right combination. Finally, in fall 2010, a broker recommended a Horizon 76 in Key Largo, Florida. Ellard, who hadn’t heard of Horizon back then, took her captain to check it out.

“I knew within five minutes on the boat that it was right,” she says. “I’m not a big changer; I know what I want and how I want it.” No surprise, then, that she also christened her vessel *Do It Now*.

Fast forward to the Bahamas conversation. El-

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Do It Now gets her name from the writings of Pope John Paul VI. His words, mounted on a plaque on board: “Live life to the limit, every moment of every day. Do it! I say. Whatever you want to do, do it now! There are only so many tomorrows.”

JIM RAYCROFT



The foredeck was once simply a place for crew to manage ground tackle, but on the E98 it’s a family-size lounge space.



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THEY THINK OF LENGTH, BUT THIS IS MORE VOLUME.”

—JO ELLARD, OWNER, *DO IT NOW*



LEFT: JIM RAYCROFT; RIGHT (FROM LEFT): JIM RAYCROFT (2), HORIZON YACHT (1)

lard was considering moving up the Horizon E88, since she mostly wanted more space. It came in an open-bridge version, which she liked, but didn't feel much bigger than her 76: The former has a 21-foot beam, while the latter has an 18-foot-6-inch beam.

“I gotta get the boat I want,” she says. “It's got to have the features I want.” That meant four state-rooms — none with bunks — a his-and-hers head in the master and space for entertaining. Ellard wanted — no, needed — more headroom too. Nearly 6 feet tall herself, she has sons who tower over her. “We're big people!” she laughs.

Horizon tapped the designer of the E88, John Lindblom, to transform Ellard's feedback into what's now the semicustom E98.

“When people go up in boats, they think of length, but this is more volume,” Ellard says. She got not only the spaciousness she wanted but also tailored touches throughout the layout and furnishings.

For example, Ellard designed (and Horizon manufactured) an extra-deep settee to span the port side of the salon. (Longlegs require longer cushions.) The salon is extra-long too. While the standard layout for the E98 has a formal dining area forward, Ellard saw no reason to include it. *Do It Now* was already

getting a country-kitchen galley and a dining area on the open bridge. Plus, friends and family could eat in the salon — at the counter extending beneath a pass-through from the galley, another custom request. (A glass partition can close it off, if desired.)

From additional refrigerator and freezer drawers to the main-deck day-head being accessible from both the aft deck and salon, *Do It Now* has numerous practical, customized features. “Every cubbyhole we could find, I put storage in,” Ellard adds.

The E98 remains beneath the 100-foot threshold, has a 23-foot beam and retains a shallow, 6-foot draft. Ellard's more than pleased, too, with how Horizon matched up the North American walnut paneling, with the grains running horizontally (her request). “I think it's perfect,” she says of her new yacht.

“I've built a ton of stuff in my life. I've dealt with contractors,” Ellard says with a knowing look. “Everything with Horizon is upfront. There aren't any surprises when you get the bill. What they tell you they're going to do is what you get.”

High praise coming from someone who knows what she wants and how she wants it. ♡

MEET MAX

Figuring prominently aboard *Do It Now* are several photographs of Max, Ellard's favorite horse. The photographer, Constance Jaeggi, is as passionate about horses as Ellard is. She captures the chestnut-colored stallion in a variety of poses, including nuzzling Ellard.

BIGGER IS BETTER

Everything is bigger in Texas, including the Ellards. And Jo Ellard is the “tiny one” at about six feet tall. That's why the dresser in the master rises up nearly to the starboard-side port.

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