





DESIGN

Designing Freedom

By Sylvie Peron - ©Altea



A jet or yacht is a confined, mobile luxury space so we set ourselves the task of creating a meditative, rejuvenating, micro-environment – an oasis of calm,» says Robin Dunlop, Founding Partner of ALTEA. «We like to think of ourselves as curators of elevated environments in every sense,» he adds. ALTEA was in the top five per cent finalists in Flexjet's recent design contest that had more than 150 entries, with their outstandingly understated 'Hygge' concept.

Clients in the private aviation or yachting space want their interiors to reflect status, comfort, and personal identity. Whether in a jet streaking across the Atlantic or a yacht anchored off the Marina Grande in Capri, the space you inhabit is not just a container - it is an extension of your will, your taste, your freedom. A new wave of clients is emerging. One that values subtlety over ostentation, and image over ego. They may be younger, but their choices are deliberate: elegance, restraint, and an acute awareness of perception.

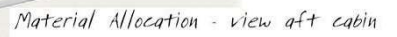
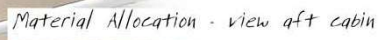
«A good designer will see your world, but it takes a great designer to expand it,» says Dunlop. «However, persuading a client that your design concept – and underlying notion of «good taste» – is the right decision can be challenging, especially when taste is subjective.»

The interior of a private jet or yacht is a domain where aesthetics, engineering, psychology, and geopolitics converge so the designer must create a bridge between high aesthetics and extreme functionality under environmental constraints. This demands a unique design pedigree, technical knowledge, and diplomatic skills which cover the user experience, safety compliance, investment value, personal image projection and multiple stakeholder satisfaction - including family, guests and crew. You may love a layout, but if it obstructs flight attendant workflows (jet) or galley-to-deck logistics (yacht), it becomes a liability.

Solid experience in the aerospace/marine domain matters. Alongside Dunlop, the ALTEA team behind the 'Hygge' concept and the dynamic force behind this integrated multi-platform design philosophy include experienced Interior Designer & Onboard Customer Experience expert - Marie Waendendries, Aviation Adviser & Industry Leader – Charlotte Pedersen, and ALTEA Completions Partner – Michael Hoby Andersen. *«We're exploring what future clients will want, often before they know it themselves,» explains Waendendries. «It's about living, not luxury per se, it's about having freedom to experience the quality of life itself. It is about the quality of silence, the flow of light, the feeling of safety, all of which become essential when you're in motion, far from home, or constantly watched. In a jet cabin or yacht lounge, this becomes not only desirable, it becomes necessary.»*

At the heart of Scandinavian design lies a deep-rooted philosophy of simplicity, functionality, and emotional well-being. The Danish concept of hygge, often translated as 'coziness', but far richer in meaning, celebrates quiet comfort, presence, and a sense of home wherever you are. It is not just about soft textures and warm lighting; hygge is about creating environments that invite calm, connection, and contentment. In design, this means thoughtful materials, gentle forms, and spaces that feel both intimate and grounding, even at 40,000 feet or at sea. Hygge is not about indulgence. It is about balance.







ALTEA's 'Hygge' Inspiration

Part of what made the ALTEA 'Hygge' inspiration so compelling within the constraints of a competition was its ability to adapt to mood and destination, highlights Waendendres.

«The overall scheme is harmonious and soft-luxe, yet subtle changes to lighting, the inclusion of a few well-chosen accessories, and the passenger is gently transported from a hike on the Icelandic volcanic terrain, to a night flight to Paris, or Christmas in Lapland,» she says.

An interior design for a private jet, helicopter, or yacht involves a delicate balance of aesthetics, luxury, function, and personal taste. Clients at this level often have strong opinions and high expectations, so persuasion must be subtle, confident, and grounded in expertise. Many high-net-worth-individuals rely on trusted referrals - discretion is paramount. *«True luxury is not always visible,»* continues Dunlop. *«But it's in every detail. A trusted portfolio should feature projects with leading OEMs and because every design element - seat, fabric, finish - must pass certification for flammability, toxicity and strength. A designer must be fluent in certification requirements, to avoid rework, delays, or compliance penalties – worst of all a loss of trust from the client.»*

The designer's aesthetic philosophy should be compatible with a client's vision and demonstrate enthusiasm and willingness to engage in creative dialogue. Equally, today's high-end jet, helicopter and yacht interiors are tech havens, so understanding the integration of advanced technology is a must-have.

Designing the interior of a high-net-worth individual's aircraft or yacht can often be a national-security-level operation that must be handled discreetly and securely with experience of security clearance, or history of working with royal families and governments.

Above all, design implementation on a private jet is a project-management-intensive endeavor involving global suppliers, aircraft OEMs, procurement lead times of 6 to 18 months, and crew coordination. Aligning budgets and controlling costs is crucial especially when a top-tier interior for a 60-metre yacht can easily exceed \$100 million, and a custom interior refit on a jet like a Global 7500, might range from \$8–15 million. The designer must optimize such areas as: material quality vs. weight trade-offs, artisan work vs. prefab efficiency, luxury experience vs. hidden costs.

A good designer blends cultural and geopolitical awareness with cross-cultural fluency gained through past work with clients from diverse backgrounds and expectations. A knowledge of religious or cultural taboos and an understanding of environmental sensitivities can influence material selection, and sourcing luxury materials often crosses borders which comes with delays, taxes, and permits.

«For private jet or yacht interiors, taste is never just taste – it's about identity, comfort, safety, and quiet power. Our role is to guide the client toward an interior vision that subtly says «this is who you are» – and to do it with conviction, clarity, and class,» concludes Dunlop. ■

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