

FOOD & DRINK SPECIAL

BOAT

International

*"I'd like to build
a 10,000GT
explorer"*

KING BENJI'S OWNER
JOSH GOLDER
EYES THE FUTURE

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*Discover the secret tables
perfect for visitors by boat*

THE
WORLD
SUPERYACHT
AWARDS

*All the winners
revealed*



MASTER STROKE

GRAND DESIGN ON 112M RENAISSANCE,
THE HOTTEST NEW CHARTER AFLOAT

MILELE: *the explorer with a
hidden sub and cinema*

GRAPE EXPECTATIONS: *the
best vineyards on the market*

ELECTRIC SHOCK: *on board
Riva's green El-Iseo runabout*

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Outdoor life is a
priority on board King
Benji, Josh Golder's
47m Dunya yacht



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This month: the remarkable boat inspired by a dog / a new leaf for *Shamrock* / life lessons from Eddie Jordan



ON
BOARD
WITH

Josh Golder

The Miami-based entrepreneur chats YouTube, super chefs and a new generation of yacht owners with *Daniel Pembrey*



The yacht is named after Golder's loyal companion Benji (below). Right: with girlfriend Brigitte Foster



41-metre navy-blue hulled yacht, *Hilarium*. "There are very few things that capture human attention like a yacht," says Golder, recalling his younger self. "What does the inside look like?"



King Benji is Josh Golder's first large custom new-build. Bottom: Golder grew up on Cape Cod



● If any movie director were available to make a biopic about Josh Golder, surely Golder himself would be the lead contender. The infectious energetic 43-year-old is an avid YouTuber and credited documentarian, and is firmly at the helm of his own journey through life. He is also "ecstatic" to finally be aboard his new 47-metre Dunya Yachts-built *King Benji* explorer boat, (she's an "11 out of 10"), and is already envisioning his next yacht-building adventure.

"I'd like to build a 5,000 to 10,000GT explorer – 10 to 20 times the size of *King Benji* – with a 1,000-square-metre gym and similar-sized spa and dog park," he says. "Some boats have come close – *Andromeda* and *Ulysses* – but we're talking about a level above. It's the building part that excites me."

How do you stay grounded, rising through the superyacht world's upper atmosphere like this? A clue lies in the name of his present yacht. "Almost 11 years ago I gave a home to a mixed breed from a dog adoption centre." Benji doesn't quite have the sea legs yet, for voyages on his

namesake boat lasting more than 10 hours, but aided by various emblems aboard, he's always in his owner's mind and heart. "I feel it's the purest form of a relationship," says Golder. "A dog doesn't care whether you have huge wealth or you're homeless."

Remaining grounded is a challenge, Golder admits. He has known both great business success, and – he is keen to point out – his fair share of failure. "Greed can start to take over if you're not careful. It's hard to set limits. When is enough, enough?" And yet the lure of building bigger, better boats proves irresistible. "Using the same people [as for *King Benji* – naval architect Greg Marshall and team], we now have the general arrangement for a 9,000GT yacht. I don't have the money yet, but building her is my next goal."

Life wasn't always like this. "I didn't grow up rich or poor; I grew up middle class." That was in Falmouth, a small beach town in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, where the owner of medical devices firm Boston Scientific tended to moor his

Where can it go? When I was starting out in business, I would look at planes, houses and other luxury items, but there was always so much mystery about yachts."

More than anything, Golder continues, "I grew up sick, with Crohn's disease [which inflames the digestive system]. I missed two years of high school because of it." In 2006, he produced and featured in the documentary *True Guts: Triumph Over Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis*, which gave many viewers with the condition a novel degree of hope. The film shows how, no matter what symptoms afflict sufferers, negative mindsets can be swapped for better ones. It alerted Golder to the power of feedback: "The film aimed to make people feel OK about living with Crohn's and the stigma that is sometimes associated with it, showing viewers a way to attain success in life. 'Gone' is not a realistic outcome with Crohn's, but 'managed' is. If you had Crohn's or ulcerative colitis, then this was a good film for you. I got a lot of positive feedback from people, including other kids' parents and even the president."

Golder's life trajectory is testimony to the transformative power of the philosophy espoused by *True Guts*, as abetted by the game-changing drug Humira, and in his case by a healthy workout regimen. Business success brought him wealth and the ability to control

his environment, which for so much of his earlier life had been beyond control. "Car rides and high school I remember as being particularly stressful things. Yachting was a great way for me to enjoy freedom, melding my own personal environment with nature, doing things on my own terms. People are on the boat because you want them there. The things you do, you do because you want to. And I love being on the water. It de-stresses me; it's peaceful."

He owned a succession of smaller Azimuts, Nor-Techs and Fjords, but *King Benji* was to his yachting what *True Guts* had been to his earlier life trajectory: an inflection point. Five years in the making, it shows the value of leaving little to chance. "The team is everything. [Builder] Dunya, Greg [Marshall] and [interior designer] Design Unlimited have all knocked it out of the park."

One of the discoveries Golder made early on was his aversion to chase boats. "If you load everything onto a chase boat, what's the point of the main one?" he asks. "I didn't want a floating St Regis hotel as a main yacht. It should be designed to handle all my needs. It should have everything you need, nothing you don't."

The approach involved creating a lot of checklists. "It was less a case of what this explorer



A 12m Nor-Tech tender can be carried on deck



boat could do, more, what couldn't she do?" Emblematic of the catch-all ethos is the deck's ability to accommodate a 12-metre, 9,000-kilogram tender. "Nobody had designed a 500GT boat to allow for this before. The tender can cover 130 to 150 kilometres in an hour and a half, so it truly expands what you can do on any given day. You might be out on it for four to six hours, so it needs an enclosed bathroom and place to take a nap." He asks: "Why confine yourself to using a tender to get ashore for buying trinkets or grabbing dinner?" (More on *King Benji's* chef shortly.) "I also like to grab my sat phone and do 100- to 150-kilometre jet-ski rides," he says. The 300-horsepower Sea-Doos stowed aboard allow for this. "They have good hulls; if you hit bad weather, you're fine."

What Golder continually reinforces is that if you want the perfect boat, you need a perfect plan – or as near perfect as is allowed by reality, virtual or otherwise. "We built a warehouse in Canada with the entire boat laid out and we'd do walkarounds with 3D goggles to ensure that every room worked." Then there is the colour palette. "I spent \$130,000 on three-metre models that we put in my own backyard to experiment with the blue and black colours. Why are 95 per cent of yachts white?" It's a

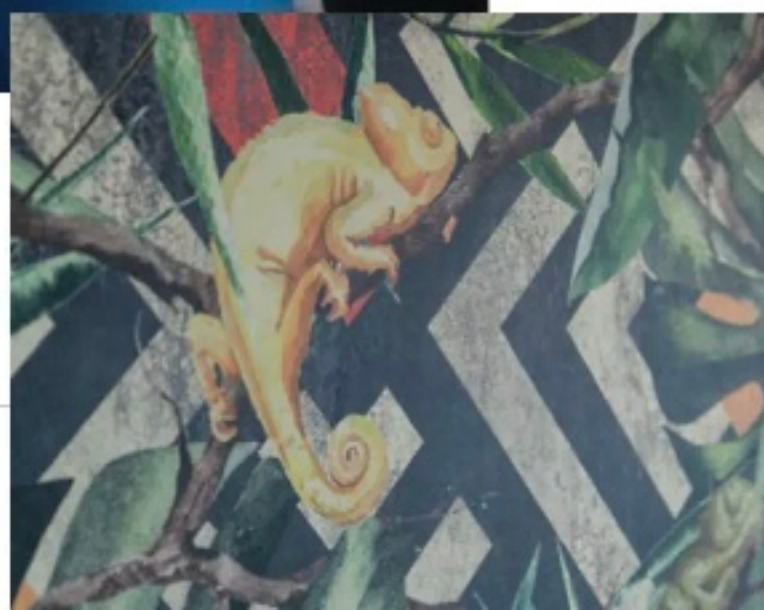


colour Golder associates with hospitals from his youth. "Historically, it's been old white men in stuffy old white boats. Now there's a new generation of owners."

There is the obvious matching of boat colour and water, but also surprises: "You get really crazy light through our staircases, which are also blue," he says.

"As you go up through the decks, you get these weird kaleidoscope effects." It's enough to bring out the playful child in all of us. Certainly, there is a quality of vibrancy aboard *King Benji* that can sometimes be absent on other, especially larger boats, and certainly absent from the hospitals of Golder's youth.

"Here's a thing," he says, eyes lit up. "Every room or space on a boat should be able to hold your attention for at least three hours." Golder has benefitted from taking



King Benji is replete with vibrant design, as Golder's philosophy is each room should hold your attention for at least three hours



The yacht's zingy blue colour was the result of much experimentation on 3m models in Golder's backyard



medicinal psychedelics, specifically mushrooms, but feels those shouldn't be required. "The design execution and the array of furnishings – objects, materials, textures – should take care of it." Examples run from a tree-top jungle-themed upper-deck owner's saloon, with crocodile print embossed leather floors and warm bamboo ceilings, to triggerfish, squid and octopus-themed bedrooms. To paraphrase the core ethos, Who wouldn't have fun here?

Furthermore, "Every room or space should have a connection to the outdoors," he says. This is where the genius of the boat really starts to reveal itself. "I've stood in yachts where it's like being at the Venetian [hotel] in Las Vegas, thinking, how many rooms do I have to walk through before I see the ocean?" Obvious examples of this outdoors orientation include the 360-degree crow's nest, hot and cold pools and an aft-deck outdoor cinema set up ("dockside onlookers could extend the crowd feeling for sporting events," he thinks aloud), but there are subtler expressions as





Albania is on the destination list for King Benji. Left and above: the yacht's chef "can do everything"



believes to be the "next Montenegro or Croatia. I'd like to see that first, before it's overrun."

Yet a deeper focus of Golder's is to bring the world to the boat. One plan is to use *King Benji* as a floating video studio. "We could do a virtual yachting weekend where the crew members set up

cameras in all the different rooms and use GoPros. Content would be live-streamed and viewers could pick between different activities: jet skis, going down the slide, etc." It's not unlike how some tourists spend vacations at marinas, viewing yachts from the docksides and taking their own photos – only, with a transformational level of access.

"I want to get good at YouTube," he says. "I'm obsessed with the young documentarians on it and how authentic they are. They're not polished; these are young kids who've set out to show these weird parts of society. They don't need approval. What does a real Florida redneck look like? Who makes the best – and worst – key lime pie?" The technology is a core part of it: "There's such instant feedback. That, and the algorithms, train you. As you improve, it becomes a very rewarding creative outlet." Like with the food and guests on the yacht, viewers get to decide.

well. The doors are sill-less, windows are picture-sized and outdoor eating is allowed both fore and aft, depending on the view desired.

Which brings us to the chef.

"It doesn't matter how good the chef thinks they are," says Golder. "It doesn't matter if they have 27 Michelin stars. What matters is how good the owner or charter client feels. If their favourite food is meatloaf, the chef needs to be able to make great meatloaf" – as the chef shows during a snappy 20-minute YouTube video, in which he equally makes pizza with truffle shavings and gold leaf topping, \$300 (£240) breakfast burritos featuring Wagyu beef, and warm chocolate chip cookies with peanut-butter toffee. "Our chef can do everything, but most importantly, he can do what matters most to you. That's a very personal thing, but it's the most important thing of all."

So, where will *King Benji* head off to? Answers include the wilds of Alaska and the Norwegian fjords: not unexpected, given the boat's serious explorer credentials – nor are the remoter islands of French Polynesia. Less expected, for this big aft-decked boat, is Albania, which Golder

JOSH GOLDER'S TOP CONTENT CREATORS

- 1 **Tommy G, @TommyGMcGee:**
"He's such a good storyteller; he makes you keep watching, second by second."



- 2 **Motor Yacht Loon, @motoryachtloon:**
"The was a first of its kind, opening up what superyachts look like."



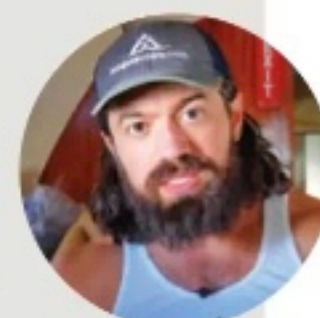
- 3 **Mr Beast, @MrBeast:**
"Quite simply the best gatherer of human attention on the planet."



- 4 **Jesse James West, @JesseJamesWest:**
"Shows how exciting fitness content can be; a must-watch through to the end."



- 5 **Alex Hormozi, @AlexHormozi:**
"Excellent content for ambitious people starting out in business."



We can't avoid the reality TV show *Below Deck*. "I couldn't do a version of that show because my boat wouldn't run at a high enough level for me and my guests," Golder says. "You can have famous reality stars, or world-class crew, but it's hard to have both." Visual stories told from the owner's perspective have also tended to fall short, he feels: "They always seem to look stuffy, in some sort of sit-down interview. What's more exciting is what can you actually do with a boat like this, with a world-class nine-person crew."

He concludes, "As human beings, we are fuelled by desire, and it's important to distinguish the feelings associated with the yearning from those prompted by actual attainment." I reach for aphorisms about journeys and destinations, but Golder is of course ahead of me with a unique take on it all: "I love this boat, and I loved building it, but most of all I love trying to bring something into the world that has never been seen or done before." Stay tuned. ■