

BOAT
PRESENTS

THE SWEET SPOT

King Benji's owner spent seven years going to the ends of the earth so you don't have to. How the "king of superyachts" came to be for sale within a year of launch is revealed here for the first time...

"That's it! – how fast can I have her?" Greg Marshall recalls Josh Golder saying 15 minutes after they'd first met in 2020. Marshall, the veteran Canadian naval architect, had just sketched out what would become the 47-metre "reference" superyacht named after his client's beloved dog, Benji.

It would be no ordinary commission, Marshall knew. Ahead lay many disrupted nights of sleep, three-metre-tall model boats (and indeed full-scale rooms) that the client had built in his backyard, plus a change order that would gut the entire finished interior.

The client was known to be a rule-breaker. Golder, now 43, grew up in New England with Crohn's disease, which inflames the digestive tract. He made his fortune in digital marketing, which afforded control over his life, but by 2020, one goal still eluded him.

"He came to me after spending three years hunting *Big Fish*, a yacht I had designed more than a decade before," says Marshall. "*Big Fish* is a 45-metre explorer – not 'shippy'-looking but rather sharp and purposeful seen cutting through the water. Such explorer yachts are rarely for sale. No matter how much

money Josh offered, the answer kept coming back, 'No.'"

Golder had already gone to the ends of the earth, namely the McMullen & Wing shipyard in New Zealand where *Big Fish* was built. Fortunately, Marshall had spent time on the finished *Big Fish* as a guest in different corners of the world. He knew what worked and why. The two men set about discovering just how ultra-luxury a sub-500GT explorer could be.

"We agreed not to reinvent the wheel," says Marshall – "a principle that soon needed reinventing. I elevated the teppanyaki bar I'd put on *Big Fish*, giving it sweeping vistas so that it became the social heart of *King Benji*. We devised multiple dining zones rather than restricting guests to confined eating

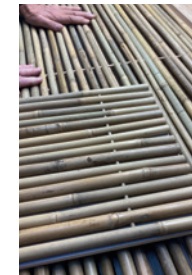
spaces. *King Benji* ended up with 10 such zones. We added drama to the crew's nest, opening up a commanding 360-degree panorama."

Window seats nestled up to cinema-screen-sized water views. Floor-to-ceiling glass doors rose daringly. Golder envisioned an owner's deck looking fore and aft, dissolving boundaries between inside and out, allowing for calming through breezes. His quest for freedom was aided by an outdoor rain shower, Japanese-style hot-and-cold plunge pools overlooking the bow, plus tranquil spots for massages dotted throughout the yacht.

Yet the biggest break with *Big Fish* lay in the sizeable aft deck, fitted with a 10-tonne crane and allowing for a

Right: Greg Marshall (on left), head of Gregory C Marshall Naval Architect, refined his design of explorer *Big Fish* to create *King Benji* for owner Josh Golder. Built at Dunya Yachts in Turkey, it features gigantic vistas throughout that blur the line between the indoors and out

"JOSH WAS A KID IN A CANDY DEPARTMENT STORE, THE HARRODS OF CANDY STORES"



treasure trove of toys: 12-metre Nor-Tech tender, long-range jet skis, towables, Seabobs, eFolds, scuba gear, sportfishing equipment and a string of structures floating off the stern – not to forget the giant water slide and separate climbing frame amidships. "Josh was a kid in a candy department store," says Marshall. "The Harrods of candy stores."

When it came to the hull colour, one person familiar with the build at Dunya Yachts witnessed Golder ingesting mushrooms in order to pick the distinctive shimmering blue. "Psychedelics seemed a path to truth for him," the source says. "He'd sit there for hours, meditation style, staring at that unimprovable hue."

Finally came the unveiling of the interior fit-out in mid-2023. "You've done exactly what I asked for," Marshall remembers Golder telling him. "Only,

I hate it." He was philosophical: "Interior design is so personal. I learned a lot from Josh, and continue to do so."

Six years into his quest, Golder struck out on his travels again, seeking fresh inspiration. He found it in the Baltic 175 sailing yacht *Pink Gin VI* (now *Ravenger*), Hotel TwentySeven in Amsterdam, plus, back home, 1 Hotel South Beach in Miami Beach. What was the through line? Vivid, transportive interiors to which the fun-seeking child in each of us responds, and a deep-seated need for relief from today's stresses. He tracked down the design firm that had served up *Pink Gin VI*: UK-based Design Unlimited.

"Wld u guys like to work on my yacht?" Golder emailed info@designunlimited.net.

"I nearly deleted that inquiry by mistake," says Mark Tucker, who leads the Design Unlimited team. "That's Josh



– always to-the-point. Nobody enjoys getting his reaction, ‘THIS SUCKS!’ if a suggestion goes south. Yet by the end of the process, we’d created something very special and original.”

King Benji won a Best Interior Design award at the 2025 BOAT International Design & Innovation Awards. Separately, she was the cover star of the magazine’s March 2024 issue. She also gained plaudits from charter clients, and not just anonymously (as testimonials in that world tend to be given).

“She’s a very unusual blend of fun and refinement,” says Mark Tchelistcheff, a Berlin-based movie producer. His grand uncle André Tchelistcheff is considered the “godfather” of fine Californian wine, and his immediate family spent several days on King Benji off the Côte d’Azur. “Such boats are rare,” he adds. “I could count them on the fingers of one mitten.”

Golder’s market research methods risked irking brokers, though. At the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show in 2024, he flew banners behind small planes above the crowds: “All Are Welcome to See King Benji: Free Pizza Party.” He thought to check what would happen if he just opened the boat to

“literally ANYONE who bought a ticket to FLIBS,” as he put it in a column for BOAT International. “That’s not how this works,” an industry insider warned him: “Charter clients and their brokers only; no commoners.”

Over the course of FLIBS, show-goers padded through King Benji, typically open-mouthed, their feet finding warm woods and more novel, crocodile-print leather tiles. Reviews were rave: “Totally lived up to expectations,” wrote Nick Burnham in Aquaholic, a column in Motor Boat & Yachting magazine. The popularity didn’t surprise Tchelistcheff. “When you see her in a marina, docked stern-to among other boats, your eye is drawn to her,” he says.

Brokers were less enamoured. “The guy is a bull in a china shop,” commented one industry insider. “He needs to be stopped – preferably matador-style, with a sword.” Could that angst be the reason Golder is selling? A business partner of his begs to differ. “Josh is super-focused on the guest experience, crew and yacht. She’s booked solid for a year.” A pause. “Only, now he has a business to sell, and a young son to raise, pulling him back ashore. He was pacing around that big

aft deck a lot – until he realised he could sell and charter back. It’s hard to imagine an owner not chartering her. With that crew, she practically charters herself.”

So who will her next owner be? “A magical thing can happen when folk hit retirement age,” says Marshall. “They go from spending two, three weeks annually on a yacht to half the year aboard – and the best half at that. It’s a beautiful home with ever-changing views. There are easy ways to adapt the design, but everything is already resolved. One of the most demanding clients in the world will do that to a yacht. There’s no wait for a build; no uncertainty.” He adds, “If she

Above and top: Mark Tucker, principal at Design Unlimited, which is responsible for King Benji’s transportive interiors. Explorer-style yachts like King Benji are having a moment, with the likes of the Sanlorenzo M (above left) sold with a listing price of \$35 million. Both yachts were 2025 award winners



In the bridge deck saloon lies one of the 10 dining zones on board

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charters for eight weeks of the year, her running costs will be met.”

King Benji’s volume also works in her favour. Above 500 gross tonnes brings a step change in manning regulations, and she comes in just below. “The crew remains on the order of the help at a large house, not a hotel staff,” Marshall says. “That’s the sweet spot. Owning remains the ultimate in discreet luxury, tailored to an individual, a couple or a family.”

Demand for these high-spec explorers remains strong. Sanlorenzo’s 47-metre 500Exp series yacht M sold late last year with a final listing price above \$35 million (the sum transacted being undisclosed). She also won a major 2025

award, and cuts a similarly adventurous profile with her aft helideck. “When the right client comes along, they want the yacht ready to go,” says Gaspard Milazzo, CEO of G-Yachts, who introduced M’s buyer. “They don’t want to wait.”

It’s what set Golder after Big Fish at the start. Reportedly, he’s upped the compensation percentage for buyer’s agents. On one point, all can agree: he doesn’t do things by halves. Ultimately, this is an explorer’s explorer yacht,” says Marshall. “Josh went to the ends of the earth so you don’t have to.”

King Benji is currently available for €27,999,999 with a large buy-side commission. +1 310 435 7728



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