

GREEK DESIGNING FLAIR

with International Acclaim



Mr. Apostolos Molindris - Managing Director



With a personal career starting back in 1986, in 1995 Mr Apostolos Molindris established Molindris & Associates, Architects & Designers (AM&A) and ever since, he has been building up an impressive portfolio of clients for his architecture and design works on land and sea. In 2007, the firm relocated to Glyfada - a suburb of Athens - and into its privately owned, very well organised offices. MR Molindris told Daniel Barnes all about his company's long partnerships within the cruise and ferry interiors industries, particularly his relationship with Attica Group's Superfast Ferries and Blue Star Ferries companies. He also revealed how and why he thinks his company is doing more than just surviving in one of the western world's most volatile economic climates.



Mr Molindris, to date, how many vessels and buildings have you designed?

Since 1995, we have designed more than 60 vessels in almost all ship categories: yachts, megayachts, cruise ships, ferry boats, ro-ro and trunks. The only categories we haven't designed are LNG trunk ships and oil rigs. We are eager to design both.

Regarding buildings, our activities encompass consulting services, design, specifications and construction supervision for hotel and office building design and interiors, shopping spaces, medical offices, private homes, luxury villas and apartment buildings.

Please tell me more about your collaboration with Attica Group.

This is a really long lasting cooperation! Our first job together goes back to 1995, with Superfast Ferries 3 and 4, and our work continues today! We have designed 24 vessels for them. The most impressive thing is, through all these years, our relationship has become stronger. I feel gratitude for the company, for the former leaders and my supporters, Periklis and Alexandros Panagopoulos, as well as for the recently deceased Petro Vetta and all the company executives.

In your opinion, how has interior ship design changed throughout your career?

The evolution of interior ship design follows the evolution of materials, innovations, applications and trends. We try to always be aware of them in order to expand our knowledge and present something new and fresh every time. We like to move forward on new paths; graphics is one of these paths. The combination of architecture and graphics can make design more comprehensive.

What projects are you currently working on?

For some time now, we have been working on a very nice project with a company new to the area of shipping. The project is under construction and I am committed not to reveal anything yet! It is a project though, that will make a difference in the area of Eptanisa.

We are also working on a passenger ship conversion for Golden Star Ferries, the ex-Osado Maru.

We have just completed the renovation of AON Offices, we are in progress of renovating the Accenture Offices in Athens, and at the same time, we undertook the complete renovation of moorings in Vouliagmeni Port - a well known restaurant and cafe bar.

You have received a number of awards and accolades over the years; which one means the most to you?

For our work on the megayacht Christina O, for the late Aristotelis Onasis, we were honored with the award 'Best Refit of 2001', in Monaco, an award organised

by the international yachting magazine, ShowBoats.

The Blue Star Patmos was awarded for its exceptional design and its outstanding interior concept by Swedish shipping publication ShipPax Information. And furthermore, for our work for ANEK Lines, with the Elyros ship, we were honored with the award 'Best Reconstruction', at the Shippax Awards.

But we have been awarded with many awards throughout our career, so objectively I could say that I am really proud of all of these projects.

Are there any particular vessels or any projects that have really stood out for you?

The projects that stand out for me are not because of the recognition they have received or their importance, nor their size. They stand out for me because of emotional reasons. For example, I am excited about the passenger ship we designed for Mare Nostrum, being built in COSCO (Zhoushan) Shipyard in China, as well as other much smaller projects, like a low budget shop we designed in our neighbourhood, the 'Fragile', and the exhibition kiosk of Intra Mare for Posidonia Shipping Exhibition.

Another favourite project is the total design and branding of the Chillbox-Frozen Yogurt and Juicy Spoons concept for Dodoni



company. We designed a chain of shops for which we were the most talked about and successful in the franchisor 2013 category.

So, on a project, when it comes to choosing the furniture, selecting the carpets, picking the lights etc, is the decision solely down to your company? Do you build close and long term relationships with a number of key suppliers or do you have to switch from ship to ship, project to project?

We design the complete interior! The start is the general arrangement of the ship, where, in close cooperation with the owners, we decide the arrangement of the public areas and the cabins. After this stage, we design the ceiling plans of all areas using different types of lights and materials on the ceilings to create a comfortable and enjoyable environment for the

passenger. After that, we work on the rest of the drawings and at the same time, we work on the colour-boards, where we carefully choose all the materials, from the floor up to the ceiling; deciding what materials will cover the walls and what fabrics and furniture to use. Carpets and fabrics are usually custom made designs that are designed by us for the specific vessel and the specific area based on the proposed colour-board. The area is completed with the selection of artworks that, most of the time, are images on which the colour scheme of the area is based on.

Of course we have long term relationships with a number of suppliers which have good quality products, with a nice design. At the same time, we are open for new suppliers to introduce new materials to us, as we really love to explore and try new materials and new techniques.

What do you think are the main reasons behind you and your company's fantastic reputation throughout the industry?

This is a very difficult question to answer! What I can honestly say is that it is not easy to define exactly what leads to my company's success. It is a combination of multiple things; of different choices we made along the way and of different people we met who influenced us.

A common factor is that we are hard-working, responsible and above all, we are passionate about our work. We deal with each and every project, regardless of its size, as an important unique project and we try to extract from our clients their aspirations and dreams about their project. And this is what we try to bring to reality with our drawings!

Another attribute is the fact that when a client comes to our office and trusts us with their project, right through to the completion of the construction, slowly by slowly, meeting after meeting, they become a member of our team. This is something that really excites me.

Personally, I consider the continuous collaborations with our clients, and the friendly relationships we build with them, to be my proudest achievement. Take Attica Group for example; each of our 18 continuous years, and each of the 24 ships we have designed, are our personal award.

What excites you the most about your work? What gets you out of bed in the morning?

What excites me about my work is my work altogether! I am a blessed person who has the luxury to work on something





that I really love. From the initial steps of our work; the first sketches, the first lines we will draw; until the last supervisions of the completed construction, I really enjoy the whole procedure.

Additionally, I have the pleasure of working with a very connected team of five architects. We have been working together for many years and we are a strong, well bonded team, ready to face any new project.

What do you consider to be the biggest challenges?

I consider the biggest challenge in our work to be the realisation of our clients' aspirations. Most of our clients are emotionally attached to the projects they assign to us and they have ambitions and dreams. I believe that our biggest challenge is to reach their goal and try to design their project in a way that exceeds their most vivid expectations!

Enough has been written about the downfall of the Greek economy, so trying to remain positive, what lessons has your company learnt from this situation? Has it made you stronger?

The previous years were very difficult for Greece and most of the people were affected by the financial crisis. Remaining positive and continuing to do our job with the same enthusiasm as always was what kept us going through these years.

I grew up being influenced by the simple wisdom of my grandfather, which often acts as a pain reliever. "Every obstacle is for the best," he used to say. I want to believe that one day we will all exit from this situation as better people.

However, this financial crisis gave our team some free time which we took advantage of by radically reorganising all our

material. We organised detailed construction drawings, we perfected material specification systems, we completed designing programmes and, in general, we got ready for new collaborations.

What is the future for the company? What design and architectural direction do you foresee it taking in the short and long term future?

Of course we are always interested in projects we have worked on in the past. We are interested in new buildings as much as any refurbishment - extended or not. A new area that we would like to work in is the accommodation areas of the trunks, oil rigs and LNG trunk ships.

We strongly believe that we have to offer very good solutions that are less expensive than the usual technical specifications, but much better from an aesthetical and functional point of view.

We are also very interested in upgrading the branding of vessels. We have worked in the past for a trunk of Neptune Lines, where very little investment provided an excellent result.

How would you summarise your company and its approach?

We are a team with great experience in ship design, with very good knowledge of the sea regulations, with a very organised and updated library of materials and specifications, capable of covering all areas of interest. We successfully design all accommodation spaces for passengers and crew, as well as the cabins.

We are really passionate about our work. We love each and every one of our designs and believe each new design to be our best; to be improved on each time. We are always ready for new projects and new challenges.

