

## **matt jones**

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### **Dressing the ‘wet set’**

*Florentine fashion house Emilio Pucci has been dressing glamorous beauties for more than half a century. First there was the jet set, now it's the wet set. The label's graphic, abstract designs are enhancing the Wallynō fast cruising sloop and all who sail in her. Text: **Matt Jones**.*

Shared recollections of childhood in Italy prompted an unlikely collaboration between two revolutionaries – the Florentine fashion label that introduced the concept of designer ready-to-wear in the 1950s and the world's leading builder of advanced composite yachts.

Since 1947, when his fashion career began with a revolutionary streamlined ski outfit featuring sleek tapered trousers and hooded parka, Emilio Pucci has dressed Marilyn, Sophia, Kylie and Nicole. The latest customer for the label's signature kaleidoscopic prints is another icon the in-crowd is on first name terms with – Wally.

The founder and president of the Monaco-based boat builder, Luca Bassani Antivari, explains how its 18 metre (60 ft) Wallynō fast cruising sloop came to have her sails, deck and cabins dressed in Pucci's iconic designs.

“The collaboration started from my friendship with Laudomia Pucci, the daughter of Emilio,” he says. “One day, we were having a nice conversation about our childhood. I reminded her that when I was a child all the ladies going to Portofino were crazy about Pucci's dresses. And Laudomia told me that her father owned a sailing yacht that carried a spinnaker hand-painted by him. So I asked her if we could do the same with the new 60 footer we had under construction, Wallynō. She was so enthusiastic about the idea that we started right away, first with the gennaker, then with the upholstery of the interiors and exteriors, to finish with the uniform of the crew.”

Pucci's Vivara print, which adorns Wallynō's 3,230 sq ft (300 sq m) gennaker, or main sail, is a bold blend of azure, lavender, turquoise and black. Hand-painted on the sail and featuring the “Emilio” signature, the design first graced the packaging of Pucci's debut fragrance in 1968 and has since become one of the house's most famous patterns. On Wallynō – which means “Little Wally” – Pucci patterns can also be found on deck in the 10-seat social cockpit and the four person sun-bathing area near the stern. Below deck, they're in the saloon area and three cabins. In choosing the patterns, Wally worked closely with Laudomia Pucci, who took over her father's business in the early '90s and is now the company's image director.

The look epitomises the glamour and fun of luxury living on the Mediterranean, and while dressing a yacht in designer fabric is not an obvious notion for the ocean, there are definite parallels between the Pucci and Wally offerings.

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When Emilio Pucci started out, he sought to liberate women, granting them unprecedented freedom and movement. On a yacht nothing epitomises freedom and movement more than wind in sails.

Pucci also sought to shed women of the impractical weight and volume of the clothing of the day, and in developing Wallynō as a fast cruising sloop capable of racing for trophies, Farr Yacht Design and Wally kept its weight and displacement to a minimum: light carbon fibre was chosen for the hull, and honeycomb aramid composite for the interior furniture and cabinetry. Even the toilets are made of carbon-composite.

Pucci's colour combinations exude energy and emotion. Owners of Wally's adrenalin-pumping products certainly experience those during a day at sea. Then, there's the primary source of Pucci's inspiration – the Mediterranean: Wallynō is in her element there.

But above all, the reputations of both companies have both been established on a radical approach to design, and their products are pleasing to the eye. Pucci's creations are known for their sexy lines, and sexy lines are something Wally's yachts – motor and sail – have become synonymous with since the company was founded in 1993. Like the female icons Pucci has dressed through the years, from Monroe to Minogue, a Wally yacht can cause a quite a commotion when it arrives in the harbours of the Med.

Just as Pucci accentuates the female form, so it enhances Wallynō's lines – what's not dressed by Pucci seems more attractive because of what is, in particular the grey of the yacht's sleek, advanced composite hull and the uncluttered teak deck, which are dominated by the large sail.

Below deck, the yacht feels surprisingly roomy, the effect of light and space accentuated by the use of white acrylic paint, which provides a neutral backdrop for the Pucci elements. The main saloon has a fold-down dining table and large sofas with Pucci covers over polyurethane foam cushions. The area accommodates 10 comfortably, but if you can squeeze in two more there's a 12-person set of tableware china, cutlery and glasses stored away in the table.

The main saloon also incorporates a navigation station to starboard (for landlubbers, that's the right side of the boat) while the galley or cooking area, with a buthane Alpes Inox cooker, is to port. The yacht can sleep six people. The owner's stateroom is forward, with a full-beam bed and en suite shower room. Aft of the saloon, Wallynō has not one, but two guest cabins, each with two beds and en suite shower room.

The first of Wally's 18 metre (60 ft) production yachts, Wallynō was launched in November 2002 and made its debut at the Pirelli Trophy regatta at Santa Margherita the following April. It captured its first racing trophy – not to mention a few hearts – soon afterwards in the very harbour where Bassani remembers seeing the Pucci-crazy ladies in the '60s: Portofino.

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Two years on, with so many marinas springing up on the Arabian Gulf, Wally is hoping to interest Middle East clients in Wallyñõ. Meanwhile, Emilio Pucci opened its first Middle East store in Dubai in June.

If you're interested in a Pucci-clad yacht, contact Wally via [www.wally.com](http://www.wally.com) (if you have to ask the price, you probably can't afford one). For ready-to-wear and accessories for the female form, head to the Emilio Pucci store at Level 2 of the Boulevard at Emirates Towers.

[Box:]

### **What a Wally!**

- Wallyñõ is an 18 metre (60 ft) sloop developed from the successful Farr 60, a yacht with exceptional performance characteristics. It's the first yacht from Monaco-based boat builders Wally in that size range.
- Wally improved the overall design, changing the deck and interior layouts for comfort and safety. Wallyñõ is designed for both leisurely cruising and competitive racing.
- Wally systems were introduced to make the boat "easy-sailing". The rig and sail plan have been innovated with a taller mast and mast-head gennaker to improve light wind performance.
- Wallyñõ's sail plan includes a self-tacking jib and a 110 per cent Genoa. The rig has no running backstays and swept back spreaders. The result is a very fast and comfortable cruiser that can accommodate six guests overnight and host 10-12 socially.
- Launched in November 2002, Wallyñõ made its debut at the Pirelli Trophy regatta at Santa Margherita in April 2003. First place trophies in subsequent events at Portofino and Saint Tropez confirm its racing credentials.
- Florentine fashion house Pucci selected Wallyñõ to introduce its new yachting collection Vivara in 2003.

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