

FRANK

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Conrad CHRISTENING

The launch of Extra Time, built by Conrad Yachts, in Gdańsk, Poland leads to a meaningful voyage of discovery.

feature

PICTURED: Conrad Shipyard's *Extra Time* at her launch party in Poland.

When people are discussing European vacation plans, you hardly ever hear, "Hmm, shall we go to Poland this year?" Poland is simply not a hugely popular destination for Americans who do not have relatives or ancestors there. I venture to say many people are a bit clouded regarding what they know about Poland.

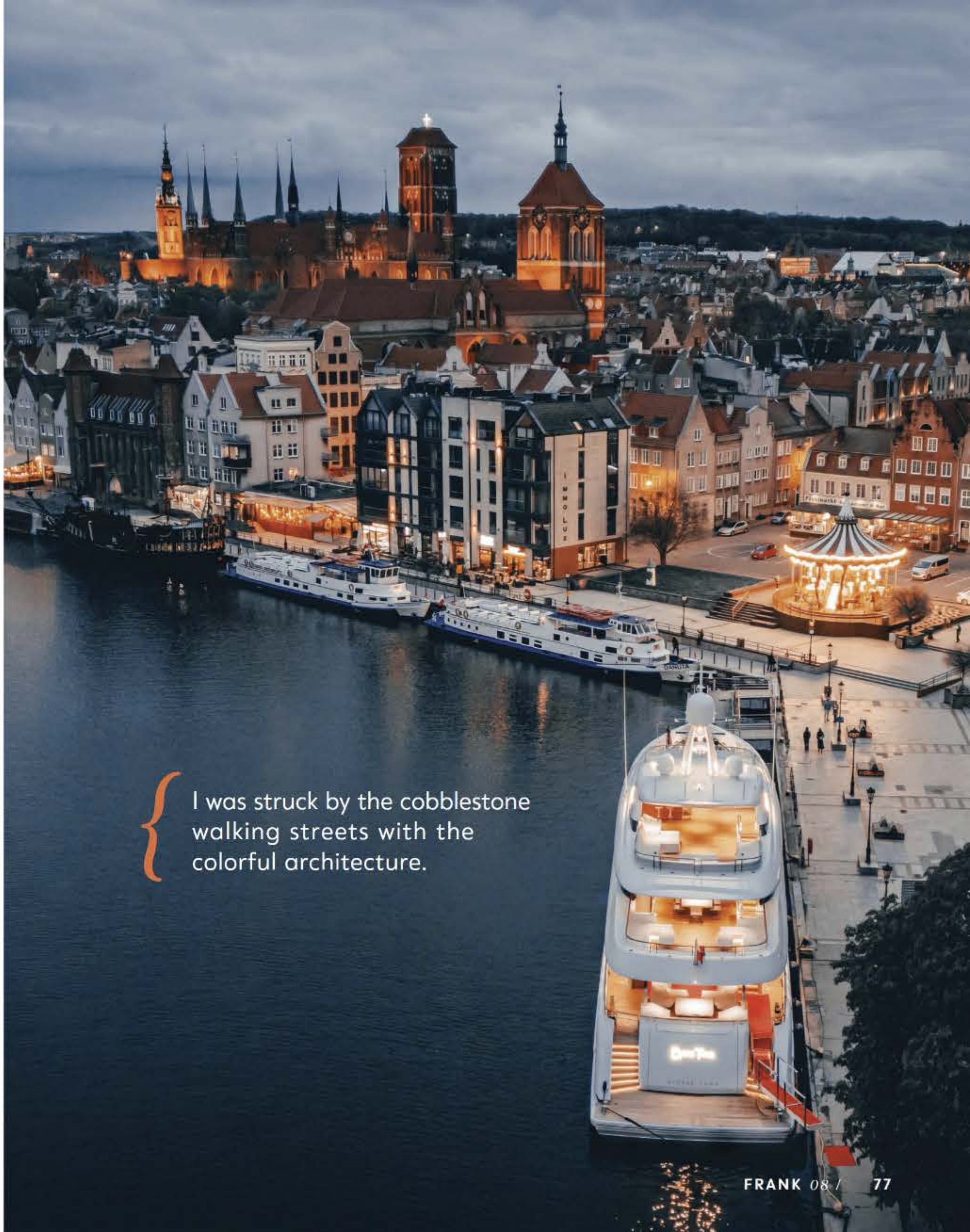
Let's take a moment and contemplate a few interesting facts. Since Renaissance times, Poland was a forerunner in advanced arts, culture, and science. Consider Copernicus (1473-1543) forefather of modern astronomy; Frederick Chopin leading composer and pianist of the early 1800s; Marie Curie, born in Warsaw in 1867 and first woman to win the Nobel Prize; and then there was Pope John Paul II's historic papacy from 1978 to 2005; renowned writer Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) and Lech Wałęsa, Nobel Peace Prize laureate. (The latter two names figure into my story.)

When Conrad Shipyard invited me to the christening party for their latest launch, the 44-meter/145-foot M/Y

Extra Time, I was excited about visiting this rising star shipyard and curious to discover Gdańsk, Poland. So, while this story is about Conrad Shipyard and the beautiful and impressive yacht *Extra Time*, I spent my "extra time" exploring Gdańsk.

The architecture and atmosphere of Gdańsk are surprisingly beautiful. Situated on the Baltic Sea, it is Poland's principal seaport, along with adjacent Gdynia and Sopot; the three sister cities form a metropolitan area known as tri-city. In the old town, I was struck by the cobblestone walking streets with the colorful architecture reminiscent of the Nyhavn section of Copenhagen and of the canal houses in Amsterdam.

Gdańsk was almost completely destroyed during World War II. When it came time to re-build the city, the authorities decided to emphasize their historic ties with the Netherlands and Flanders rather than with Germany. Thus, today's Gdańsk is reminiscent of Dutch Renaissance style. There are the statues on the rooftops and gargoyles and embellishments on the buildings. Tall, narrow buildings in an array of blues, yellows, and reds are a visual wonder. Clock towers, the majestic town hall, churches, and myriad restaurants with outdoor seating (and necessary heat lamps) line the streets. Culinary delights abound. One can certainly find much more than Pierogis and sausage.



I was struck by the cobblestone walking streets with the colorful architecture.

PICTURED: Lech Wałęsa (below);
Extra Time in Old Town (far right).

**GDAŃSK IS THE HISTORICAL
BIRTHPLACE OF THE FAMOUS
Solidarity movement spearheaded
by Lech Wałęsa.**



There is the historic Dwór Artusa building with the famous Neptune statue in front of it. Street stalls of amber jewelry and other products along with Polish ceramics reflect ages-old craft traditions. I also stumbled upon a cool maritime museum filled with working boats from around the world. Perhaps the most significant museum in Gdańsk is the 2017-built modern Museum of the Second World War, covering a space of 2.5 acres.

Gdańsk—which, admittedly, was never on my bucket list—has, nonetheless, been on my

radar since my early adulthood as the historical birthplace of the famous Solidarity movement spearheaded by Lech Wałęsa. For the uninformed (no judgment here), Solidarity—signifying the self-governing Polish trade union—was a broad anti-authoritarian movement that inspired and created both social change and advancement for the rights of workers. The Trade Union was founded in 1980 at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdańsk. Despite the government imposing martial law to destroy the union,

the movement and the union persevered under extremely challenging circumstances and succeeded. Wałęsa—a shipyard electrician—was one of the key figures behind the union. The union and the movement were highly instrumental in ending communism in Poland. Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983, Wałęsa went on to serve as president of Poland from 1990 to 1995. He was the first democratically elected president in Poland since 1926 and the first-ever president elected by popular vote.



PICTURED: *Extra Time* is a modern superyacht built in a historic shipyard.

What does this have to do with Conrad Shipyard and the christening of motor yacht *Extra Time*? Frankly, a lot. The story of Lech Wałęsa—who is still a prominent resident of Gdańsk—is legendary and the movement which began in a shipyard has become folkloric. Chairman and CEO of Conrad Mikolaj Krol, who officiated at the christening for *Extra Time*, reminded those of us attending the event that Gdańsk has deep maritime roots, a strong culture of shipbuilding and seafaring trade.

“Founded in the 10th century, Gdańsk is now a city built on freedom, solidarity, and pride,” said Krol.

Because of its position between Northern and Western Europe, and since the time of 15th century knights, Gdańsk was a vital naval city and a center for the Polish grain trade.

Krol is not only an astute CEO, but he is also a warm personable gentleman. When he speaks, his sincerity is palpable. A family man, naturally he takes pride in the accomplishments of his 25-year-old son, Adam, and 19-year-old daughter, Helena. In fact, it was Helena who was invited to perform the champagne christening honors for *Extra Time*, as the yacht owner’s wife could not make it the ceremony—Krol calls his daughter “the godmother” of the yacht. Helena is a student of music, an opera singer and classical pianist among being adept at other instruments. The European owner of *Extra Time* enjoys music as well. In fact, in his study in the master suite

PICTURED: Christening *Extra Time*.

aboard *Extra Time* is a built-in piano. Therefore, the synergy was fitting. Conrad is a family-run business priding itself in building dream yachts for clients who cherish family time aboard—which is the case for the owners of *Extra Time*.

Krol is quick to give credit to everyone at Conrad: “The true heart of our company lies in our people, our team of craftsmen and women, our engineers and industry experts. Generations of skill infused into every yacht we build.”

The christening took place on the waterfront in front of the Gdańsk Hilton Hotel. Along with the vice president (a.k.a. mayor) of Gdańsk and other city notables, everyone who worked on the yacht was invited to the christening lunch and ceremony. It was a festive celebratory occasion for a few hundred people.

The site of the current Conrad shipyard has its roots dating back to Poland’s occupation during World War II. Conrad Shipyard is named for the acclaimed 19th century aforementioned author, Joseph Conrad, famous for novels such as *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness*. In addition to prose, Conrad was a sailor and a merchant marine.

Conrad’s parent company, Marine Projects Ltd., was originally founded as a ship-building-oriented engineering company in 1989. The company has a workforce of over 500 people. In 2003, Conrad became the official superyacht division under the Marine Projects umbrella. Since its inception, 25 motor and sailing yachts from 12 to 66 meters in length were built or refitted at Conrad. It operates at the same site as the commercial yard. However, its facilities are

The christening took place on the waterfront in front of the Gdańsk Hilton Hotel.

currently undergoing a several-year renovation and expansion program.

Extra Time is a sister ship of *Ace*, the award-winning Conrad C144S launched in 2022 (the S stands for straight bow). Built to Lloyds MCA LY3, the C144Ss are full displacement steel hulls and aluminum superstructures with 497 gross tons. These two yachts and a third in the series—currently in build for a new client—are the largest new builds in Conrad’s history. *Extra Time* has a five-stateroom configuration with a main deck owners’ suite. Exterior design is by Reymond Langton, naval architecture by Diana Yacht Design, and interior by m²atelier. *Ace*, with her clean lines and contemporary interior, earned much attention during her debut at the Monaco Yacht Show in 2023.

The client who commissioned *Extra Time*—a first-time yacht owner—was taken by the photos he and his wife saw depicting *Ace*. They decided to build their yacht on *Ace*’s footprint. Of course, they made a few changes and added personal touches, such as the built-in electric piano and personal artwork.

A few days before the christening, I was invited on a sea trial. It was hard to believe we were even moving as the yacht is extremely stable and very quiet underway.

Denison Yachting has been a proponent of Conrad Shipyard for many years. Broker Alex G. Clarke and his wife Natalia were on hand for *Extra Time*’s christening. Clarke sold Hull #2 (*Extra Time*) and Hull #3, and is now offering Hull #4 exclusively for sale with a delivery of September 2026. “Conrad Shipyard is a special place to build a yacht,” says Clarke. “The culture, the pride of the workforce, the overall quality is all unmatched in the market today. The pedigree of Reymond Langton Design and Diana Yacht Design only elevates this passion. I’m super proud to be part of this journey with the entire team at Conrad.” *Extra Time* will be displayed at the 2024 Monaco Yacht Show.

Conrad is not resting on its laurels. The team at Conrad is dedicated to evolving and creating more award-winning yachts. When clients are thinking about building in northern Europe, they will come to understand that northern Europe is not only Germany, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia. Gdańsk, Poland and Conrad Shipyard have a lot to offer. Take a tour of the yard and stay for an enriching visit to Gdańsk. **F**



feature

PICTURED: *Extra Time*
was launched with pride.

