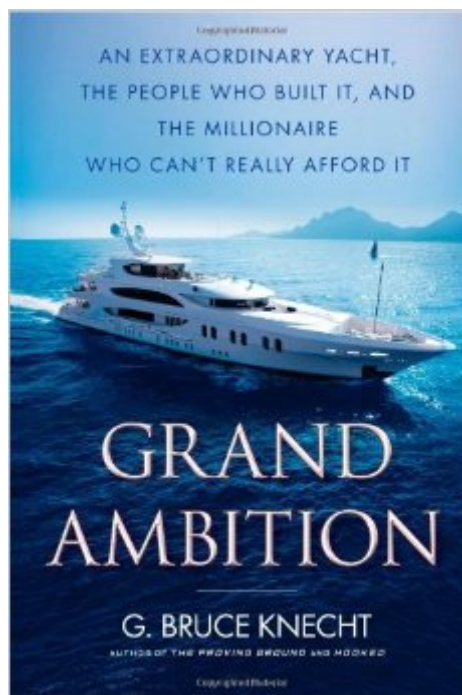


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Grand Ambition: An Extraordinary Yacht, The People Who Built It, And The Millionaire Who Can't Really Afford It



Synopsis

G. Bruce Knecht, former reporter for The Wall Street Journal and author of *The Proving Ground* and *Hooked*, describes the creation of an outsized yacht in a sweeping narrative centered on the men and women who made it happen. DOUG VON ALLMEN, a self-made man who grew up in a landlocked state dreaming of the ocean, was poised to build a 187-foot yacht that would cost \$40 million. Lady Linda would not be among the very largest of the burgeoning fleet of oceangoing palaces, but Von Allmen vowed that it would be the best one ever made in the United States. Nothing would be ordinary. The interior walls would be made from rare species of burl wood, the floors paved with onyx and exotic types of marble, the furniture custom made, and the art specially commissioned. But the 2008 economic crisis changed everything. Von Allmen's lifestyle suddenly became unaffordable. Then it got worse: desperate to reverse his losses, he fell for an audacious Ponzi scheme. Would Von Allmen be able to complete Lady Linda? Would the shipyard and its one thousand employees survive the financial meltdown? The divide between the very rich and everyone else had never been greater, yet the livelihoods of the workers, some of them illegal immigrants, and the yacht owners were inextricably intertwined. In a sweeping, high-stakes narrative, the critically acclaimed author of *The Proving Ground* and *Hooked* weaves Von Allmen's story together with those of the men and women who are building his yacht. As the pursuit of opulence collides with the reality of economic decline, everyone involved in the massive project is forced to rethink the meaning of the American Dream.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An extraordinary yacht, the people who built it and the millionaire who can't really afford it. Simon & Shuster. Don't walk, run to your neighborhood bookstore to buy this book. Stop reading this review now and go to your favorite e-seller and get a copy or a download. This book, intentionally or not, is remarkable for its detailed up-close and personal depiction of the people who have made the country what it is. Full disclosure: I love yachts of all kinds, including superyachts. I own a modest yacht myself and have upgraded and bought a different boat four times in the last 30 years. So I understand dissatisfaction in the nautical realm. My yearly yard bills cost the same as tuition in a state university. I subscribe to several superyacht glossies and attend as many major yacht regattas as I can. I write about yachting for a local paper and can talk about yachts all day and night. I also have several really rich friends, and I don't hold their Forbes listings against them. That said this book shocked me. For starters, writer G. Bruce Knecht has pulled off a coup of real proportions. I would pay to see the release form his subjects signed. They include the Von Allmens, Trinity Yachts, yacht designer Evan Marshall and Ingo Pfothenauer, the owner's rep. They must all believe that any celebrity is better than none. You can understand this for Snookie and JWOWW on Jersey Shore, but to lay bare all the absurdity and incompetence of your supposedly successful life for all to see really takes chutzpah. Let's start at the end. Three years later, the Von Allmens kinda get the yacht they want, the yacht that was supposed to be the ultimate American-made one. Yet they don't seem satisfied.

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