





HERITAGE

## Masters of their worlds

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The history of Camper & Nicholsons, and bespoke tailors Gieves & Hawkes, is the story of two companies in different industries, but with a great deal in common.

**B**oth companies have over 200 years' experience in servicing the most prestigious clientele. And, both brands are firmly embedded in quality, tradition, heritage, sophistication and craftsmanship; values that have placed them among the pantheon of great luxury brands worldwide.

As far back as the late 18th century, before the word 'superyacht' even existed, the name Camper & Nicholsons was for many the definition of yachting. Much has been written about the famous clients of the brand, from British Royalty to Hollywood stars. King Edward VI built two yachts at the Gosport yard, the *Hildegard* and the *Aline*. George V commissioned Charles E Nicholson to modernise the Royal Yacht *Britannia*, and in more recent times, the Queen and Prince Philip commissioned Camper & Nicholsons to build a Royal Barge for *Britannia*. The Royal Family also owned the Camper & Nicholsons built *Bloodhound*, arguably one of the most famous ocean racers of all time. In similar vein, Gieves & Hawkes has been supplying garments to no less than ten generations of British Royalty; from King George III in 1809 to the present day, Queen Elizabeth II, the Prince of Wales and Princes William and Harry.

A lesser known fact is that most of the pre-war Camper & Nicholsons built motor yachts were requisitioned for military service by the Royal Navy during both World Wars. The outbreak of the First World War saw Camper & Nicholsons switch to designing and building military craft including coastal motor boats. During this period Camper & Nicholsons also became heavily involved in the development of the flying boat, initially for wartime use but later for the newly emerging commercial airline industry.

The Second World War saw many privately owned Camper & Nicholsons built yachts requisitioned. Often manned by their civilian pre-war crews and commanded by their captain or owner (under the auspices of the Royal Navy), the strength and quality of their build proved to be vital when, for example, vessels such as the 113-metre *Esmeralda* was thrown onto her beam ends during a mine clearance in the Second World War, surviving the incident with no structural damage. She subsequently played a very significant role as the first British vessel to enter Cherbourg Harbour after it was captured by the Allies.













Other Camper & Nicholsons boats that were requisitioned included the 80-metre motor yacht *Philante*, which was taken in hand by the Admiralty at Portsmouth in 1939 and served as a training vessel with the Fleet Air Arm, before becoming an escort vessel in the North Atlantic convoys during 1941 and 1942. In the latter stages of the war she was based in various ports in Great Britain, one of her last roles was to escort surrendering German U-Boats before being de-requisitioned in 1945.

Requisitioned just two days after war broke out, the 40-metre motor yacht *Evadne* was refitted and armed, spending the first part of the war escorting convoys in the Irish Sea before convoy duty to Bermuda in 1943. There she remained on anti-submarine duties at the Royal Naval Dockyard, becoming known as *HMS Evadne*.

It wasn't just motor yachts that were requisitioned. The 63.3-metre three-masted schooner *Creole* was used to demagnetise the steel hulls of warships to protect them from magnetic mines.

Camper & Nicholsons provided both its extensive design capability and facilities at Gosport to provide the Royal Navy with launches ranging from motor torpedo boats to landing craft. Their location at Gosport, opposite the Royal Naval Dockyard at Portsmouth was ideal for this co-operation.

Correspondingly during this time, while Camper & Nicholsons was providing yachts, Gieves & Hawkes was providing uniforms to the military. Both Gieve, and Hawkes, were established in the 18th century, but it was not until the 20th century that the two houses came together to become Gieves & Hawkes.

Hawkes was established in London in 1771 and with Royal endorsement from King George III and Queen Charlotte, went on to add Royal dukes and

senior ranks of the army to his clientele, including the Duke of Wellington. While Hawkes was dressing the Duke of Wellington, Gieve founder "Old Mel" Meredith tailored the uniform that Admiral Lord Nelson wore at the Battle of Trafalgar; thus two of the most important commanders in British history were customers of both Gieve and Hawkes (before they merged). The great victories of Trafalgar in 1805 and Waterloo in 1815 established Great Britain as a major maritime and land power and precipitated the growth of the British Empire during the rest of the 19th century. Both Gieve and Hawkes played their part in this enterprise through their service to the Royal Navy and the British Army.

The Crimean War in the 1850s also proved a turning point. It was a period when yachting took a downturn. However, several members of the Royal Yacht Squadron had a long tradition of regarding their yachts and themselves as auxiliaries to the Royal Navy, and so it was, that during this time, the Camper & Nicholsons built *Erminia* arrived at Balaclava with the honorary agents of the Crimea War Fund on board, organised by The Times newspaper. It was during this same period that Gieve chartered a yacht as a mobile tailors, sailing to the Black Sea to provide naval officers involved in the conflict with on the spot tailoring services.

Over the centuries, both Gieve and Hawkes, and Camper & Nicholsons have traded on their combined tradition of craftsmanship and quality. Gieves & Hawkes continue to supply not only royal houses in Europe and around the world, but also many famous personalities with garments based on variants of military and ceremonial court dress. And, although Camper & Nicholsons no longer build yachts, we inspire and supervise the construction of yachts by the world's most talented and innovative yards, naval architects, designers and engineers.



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PREVIOUS PAGE Both Gieve and Hawkes have been supplying military uniform since the 18th century and continue to produce, on request, variants of military and court dress TOP occupied by the business since 1912, the eighteenth century townhouse at No. 1 Savile Row, London, houses Gieves & Hawkes Royal and military archive BOTTOM LEFT AND RIGHT Split over two floors, the global flagship store houses ready-to-wear, tailoring and bespoke services







**LEFT** Gieve kitted out a yacht as a tailoring workshop in the 1850s and sailed to the Black Sea during the Crimean War to supply the uniform requirements of the British naval officers involved in the conflict

**BELOW** Some of the great explorers of the Victorian age were kitted out by Hawkes in safari uniforms, notably Sir Henry Morton Stanley who famously discovered the whereabouts of another celebrated pioneer, Dr. David Livingstone, in darkest Africa

OPPOSITE PAGE

This item  
combined sartorial  
correctness with a  
life-saving function.  
The lifebelt  
concealed within  
the waistcoat could  
be inflated via the  
tube in the pocket

Life-saving waistcoat  
Gieves, First World War

