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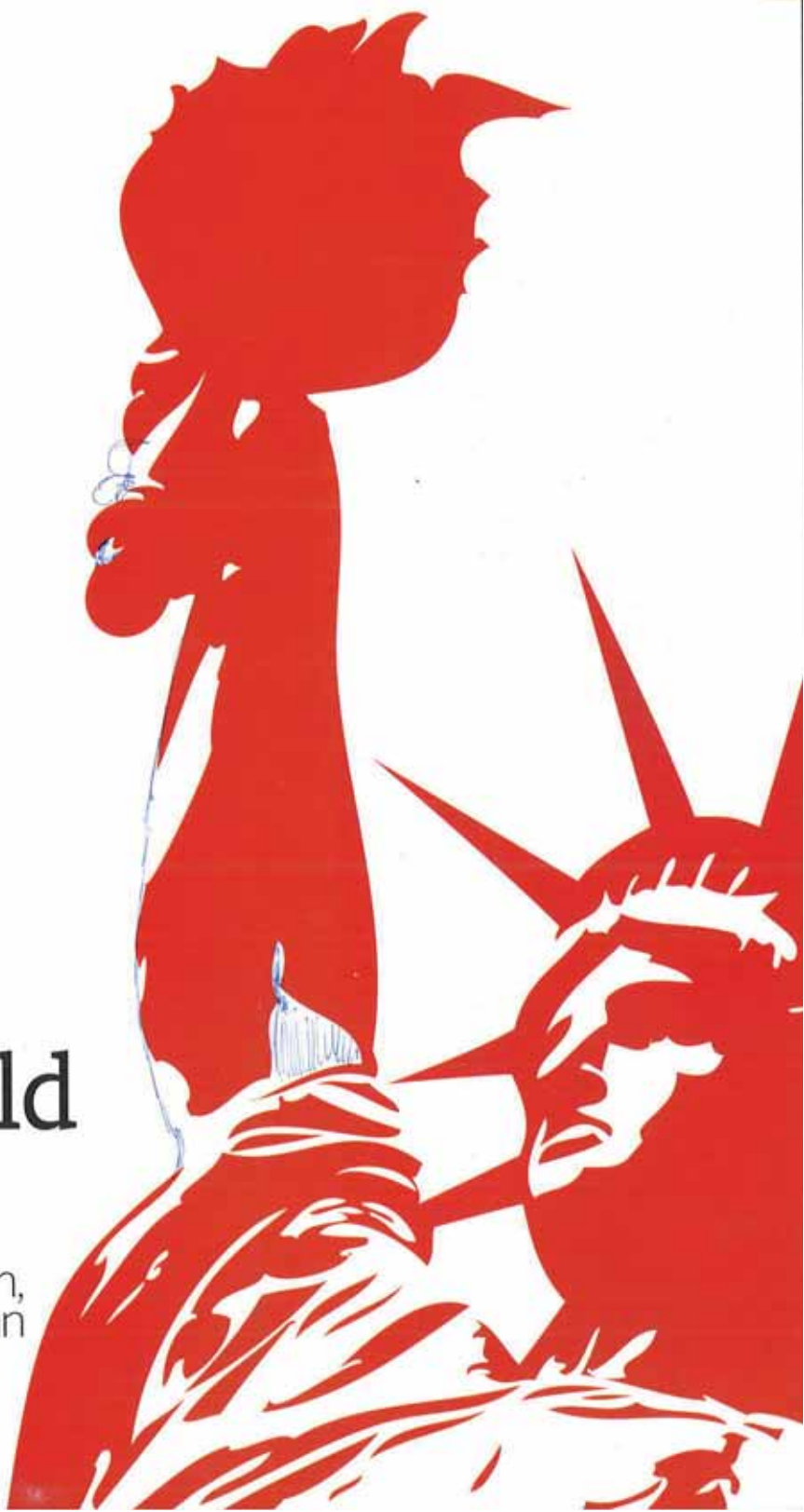
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Now you see it, now you don't

EVER SINCE PEOPLE STARTED GOING TO SEA, FALLING OVERBOARD HAS BEEN A CONSTANT RISK. SEA STEEL HAS NOW DEVELOPED AN INNOVATIVE HANDRAIL SYSTEM THAT RISES AT THE FLICK OF A SWITCH TO HELP MAKE OUTDOOR AREAS SAFE FOR GUESTS AND CREW

TOM HASKER REPORTS



Sea Steel's handrails make a balcony safe at the flick of a switch

Safety aboard a yacht is a priority and falling overboard is a constant risk. This age-old problem has been solved with handrails, of one form or another, that provide a safe ring all around the yacht. Now, though, designers are adding balconies that fold out from the hull to expand cabin space. These balconies usually need a crewmember to lower the balcony then attach a handrail ready for the guest or owner to use. This can cause an inconvenience to the cabin occupant who may not want the presence of a crewmember in their cabin.

Sea Steel, part of Fratelli Canalicchio SpA has developed an automatic handrail system that can be installed into these balconies so that the whole process can be simply operated

by the guest or owner. Sea Steel sets up the installation so that lowering the balcony also activates the handrails to rise at the same time. This means that as soon as the occupant of the cabin steps out onto the balcony there is always a handrail ready.

Each handrail has two uprights formed of two sections. The lower section is connected to a hydraulic plunger that makes it rotate through 90° from horizontal to vertical. This movement causes the top section to rotate in a similar fashion making the handrail rise. The two uprights fold with the middle hinge of each upright moving towards the other, this way the handrail remains horizontal throughout the movement. The automatic handrails can



withstand a sideways force of 530N (Newtons) and a downwards force of 8,000N (Newtons) allowing people to lean against the rail with confidence. Several handrails are connected together to form the edge of the balcony and all the hydraulic plungers can be controlled in unison or independently to provide the desired handrail configuration.

The mechanism can be designed to fit into the balcony structure so that it completely disappears ready for when the balcony is raised into the stowed position. This has the added advantage of saving

stowage space as the handrails are kept in an otherwise unused part of the hull structure.

Another important application is in helping a yacht prepare for a helicopter landing. Sundecks on some yachts double as a temporary landing zone but while the furniture can be removed from within the safety of the handrails, removal of the handrails themselves puts the crew at risk. With automatic handrails the crew are able to lower them from a safe position ready for the helicopters arrival. Once the helicopter is on deck the automatic handrails can be raised again to secure the area. The system is especially beneficial for short handed crews as the whole area can be controlled from a single position by one person, quickly and efficiently.

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