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RMK Yachts launches historic steam yacht Cangarda following major restoration

RMK Yachts has successfully launched the historic steam 38-metre yacht Cangarda following an extensive restoration project at its state-of-the-art shipyard in Istanbul. The yacht has been transferred to the Rahmi M. Koç Museum in Haliç, Istanbul, where she will become a permanent centrepiece celebrating maritime heritage and engineering excellence.

“From the very beginning, we approached Cangarda not as a refit project, but as a responsibility towards global maritime heritage. Our goal was to protect her spirit, not to reinterpret her,” said Cuneyt Okcu, Director of RMK Yachts.

Originally built in 1901 in the United States, Cangarda is widely regarded as one of the finest surviving steam yachts of her era. Designed during the golden age of yachting, she represents a rare example of early 20th-century naval architecture and steam propulsion, combining elegant lines with advanced engineering for her time. Over more than a century, Cangarda has passed through multiple ownerships and refits, each contributing to her storied history.

A museum-grade approach

The restoration project undertaken by RMK Yachts was initiated to preserve Cangarda’s historical integrity while ensuring her structural and mechanical longevity as a museum exhibit. The project reflects the shipyard’s capability to manage complex restorations, combining traditional craftsmanship with modern expertise.

Following her arrival in Istanbul in October 2024, Cangarda underwent a carefully planned programme of maintenance, conservation, and functional reinstatement at RMK Yachts, completed within schedule despite the project’s exceptional historical sensitivity. The scope of work included detailed hull and structural inspections, overhauls of mechanical and steam systems, interior conservation and repairs, as well as work on rigging, deck equipment, and safety systems. Throughout the process, the project was managed with discipline and precision, ensuring technical reliability without compromising historical authenticity.



“All interventions were carried out with a museum-grade conservation mindset rather than a modernisation approach,” explained Okcu. “Wherever technically feasible, original elements were preserved, including Cuban mahogany joinery, brass and bronze fittings, deck outfitting, interior layouts, and numerous mechanical components.”

Elements that had deteriorated beyond recovery were reconstructed using historically accurate methods and materials, strictly adhering to the original specifications. The hull and superstructure received protective treatments and repairs that respected original geometry and construction philosophy, ensuring long-term structural integrity while retaining historical character.

Authenticity preserved

Particular care was devoted to Cangarda’s steam propulsion system, which presented one of the project’s greatest challenges. While the original configuration was preserved, selected components were rebuilt to meet safety and operational requirements.

Due to the scarcity of expertise in early 20th-century steam yacht technology, RMK Yachts sought specialist support internationally. Critical expertise was ultimately provided by engineers from one of Koç Holding’s leading energy companies in Türkiye, whose guidance enabled the steam system to be successfully restored in line with its original design.

The restoration required a constant balance between authenticity and responsibility, with every decision weighed against both historical fidelity and long-term preservation. Special attention was given to the conservation of brass and bronze accessories, restored by the RMK Museum Workshop Team, while the interior was treated as a living document of its era, preserving original furniture, materials, finishes, and spatial arrangements.

Acting as both technical and strategic partner, RMK Yachts delivered not only shipyard infrastructure, but also engineering expertise, project coordination, and conservation-focused execution worthy of one of the world’s finest surviving steam yachts.

On display in Istanbul

Following her launch, Cangarda transferred to the Rahmi M. Koç Museum, one of Türkiye’s leading institutions dedicated to the history of industry, transport, and engineering. Displayed in Haliç, a historic maritime hub of Istanbul, the yacht will be accessible to the public as a living testament to early steam-powered yachting. She will continue to educate and inspire future generations. A documentary about Cangarda’s



journey and restoration is now in production. It is planned to be released in 2026, offering viewers a closer look at the yacht's unique heritage and craftsmanship.

With the launch of Cangarda, RMK Yachts reinforces its position as a shipyard capable of delivering not only advanced modern yachts, but also the meticulous restoration of historically significant vessels at the highest international standards.