

100-year history of Hakvoort Shipyard.

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How it all began: Albert Hakvoort started the yard with the purchase of several lots, a warehouse and a range of shipbuilding equipment in Monnickendam in 1919. It was a time of great uncertainty for the South Sea (Zuiderzee) region with the construction of the Afsluitdijk dike on the horizon. Albert Hakvoort nonetheless decided to pursue his plans and managed to establish a flourishing yard.

The second generation of the family, Klaas Hakvoort, joined the yard as a partner in 1944. The yard became increasingly successful after WWII ended and, in 1946, switched from wooden vessels to steel. Over time, these vessels became larger and larger and, to facilitate this growth, the yard built a new slipway to allow for the repair and construction of larger, heavier ships. It also enabled Hakvoort to respond to the expansion of the Urker fleet by building large steel trawlers and benefitting from the revival of the fishing industry.

Disaster struck in 1955 when a fire destroyed the two sheds at the yard and the adjacent houses. This was a financial catastrophe for the business, which was not insured for religious reasons. Son Albert left the trade school he was attending to help out and the hard work that followed over the following years helped slowly rebuild the yard. The family's perseverance was rewarded as Hakvoort acquired an excellent reputation for building steel hulls for fishing trawlers, 70 of which were completed between 1959 and 1980.

Partly thanks to technical innovations, including the use of a CAD system to draw bulkheads which was taken into use in 1965, the yard established a fast and efficient build process. In the 1960s, Hakvoort built a series of 40 trawlers. Initially built to order, they became so popular that they were later built on spec too.

Klaas Jr. joined the company in 1971 at a time when the yard was experiencing increasing competition in trawler construction, both in the Netherlands and from international yards that were starting to approach the famous Dutch quality levels. Other Dutch yards experienced similar problems. Demand declined while the supply remained stable, putting such pressure on prices that trawler construction became unprofitable.

A major moment in the Hakvoort Shipyard history was the order received from a client in Florida for a 70 ft Striker sports fishing yacht. This high-speed aluminium yacht that marked the beginning of the yard's shift from fishing trawlers to pleasure yachts.

The third generation of Hakvoorts, Albert and Klaas Jr., had now been with the company for some time and were playing an increasingly important role, including in determining the company's policy. More so than Klaas Sr., the new generation saw yachtbuilding as the market for the future. Eventually the yard built 15 yachts in the Striker series, all for American clients. The new course was a success, and Hakvoort's excellent reputation became firmly established on the other side of the Atlantic too.

While the Dutch yachtbuilding sector faced substantial difficulties in the 1980s, Hakvoort continued to do fairly well with the construction of luxury yachts, mainly for the American market. Klaas Hakvoort Sr. gradually stepped back, and resigned as an active Board member in 1981. His sons Albert and Klaas took over.

The first large yacht built by the yard was the 31.5-metre *Tonga* for an American client. This was immediately followed by a 38-metre aluminium yacht called *Lady Alice*, commissioned via an American broker who was impressed by the Monnickendam yard's skills. More orders followed, resulting in a constant stream of increasingly larger and more luxurious yachts.

In 1993, Albert bought out his brother Klaas. It was during this period that Hakvoort built its first yacht for what would later become the Oceanco yard. The two yards even had a one-off joint presentation at the superyacht show in Nice. Later, Hakvoort felt that it couldn't be a full partner in the collaboration and decided to continue independently.

The fourth generation, Klaas and Albert Jr., joined the yard in June 1991 and October 1993, respectively. In 1999, the carpentry department was expanded with a new hall in Purmerend which used a mock up system to manufacture yacht interiors.

The credit crisis which crossed over from the US in 2008 greatly affected European yards, and Hakvoort soon saw orders being cancelled. As the market for larger yachts around 60 metres remained relatively stable, Hakvoort decided to expand its large hall to 66 metres in 2011. It was an immediate success. Immediately after competition the yard was commissioned to refit a 49-metre yacht, soon followed by the build of a 61-metre and a 64-metre yacht for Russian clients.

Hakvoort had the wind in its sails when the Russian market collapsed in 2014 due to sanctions issued by the EU. The yard's Russian clients went bankrupt and had to cancel their orders. Thanks to existing business relations, Hakvoort managed to sell both of the yachts it then had in build. However, from 2007 to 2015 the yard only launched five yachts – a major reduction compared to the (approx.) two vessels that were being launched a year prior to that.

At the heart of the Russian crisis, Albert and Klaas Jr., the fourth generation of the company, took over the helm from their father in 2014. They continued on the same path with an even stronger focus on luxury yachts. In 2016 the yard was expanded with an extra facility elsewhere in Monnickendam harbour, equipped to manufacture large parts and accommodate a stainless steel division. Moreover, an extension of the large hall enabled the yard to deliver two 60-metre+ yachts and, in 2019, the yard also extended the smaller hall to build yachts up to 45 metres.

The growth in the size of the yachts meant that the Hakvoort offices also needed more space. In 2020 a renovation project to double the yard's office space got underway. Due for completion in 2021, this will ensure that Royal Hakvoort Shipyard is ready and able for whatever the future may bring.

