

Snowbird



New yard, new yachts

The Dutch town of Monnickendam has more than 200 years of shipbuilding heritage. Its yard first passed to its current owners in 1919 when the Hakvoort family, led by entrepreneur Albert Klzn Hakvoort, purchased the facility in order to build traditional wooden fishing boats. Now named simply Hakvoort Shipyard, its remit of shipbuilding has changed over the decades towards the luxury steel hull and aluminium superstructure yachts the yard is now best known for.

Hakvoort has gained an impressive reputation for itself, highlighted in *Shipping & Marine's* previous article on the company (issue three 2011) when the yard professed it had felt little impact from the recession due to the five-year roster of orders it had in place by 2008. At that point it was undertaking enough newbuild contracts not only to

require drafting in an additional 20 employees to complement its permanent team of 90 but also to consider building two additional construction sheds. This would bring the total number of sheds at the yard to four.

This plan has yet to come to fruition. Instead, as managing director Albert Hakvoort Jr explains, the existing facilities have been upgraded: "What we have done is raise the roof on the main shed and put in a new slipway, and are now extending the main shed's length by seven metres so that we are capable of building vessels up to 63 metres in length. The economic crisis changed the nature of the market and what we saw were orders for larger boats of 50 metres upward. Vessels below 50 metres are very hard to sell at the moment so we focused on being able to construct larger, rather than more, yachts."

At present Hakvoort is working on three projects: two newbuilds

and a possible refit. YN247, the older of the two newbuilds, is a 40 metre oceangoing motor yacht featuring eight first class quality cabins (four guest, two crew, one captain, one owner) and includes a very high standard of interior design provided by Reymond Langton Design Ltd. All work has been carried out to Lloyds MCA standard and is almost complete, with delivery of the yacht to its Russian owner expected around May or June 2013.

YN248 is slightly different to Hakvoort's previous builds in that it has an atypical layout. Rather than guest cabins on the lower deck the YN248 has crew quarters, with guest cabins on the main deck and owner cabin on a dedicated private deck above. Apart from this, however, the 61-metre vessel meets the same high standard of exterior and interior workmanship that defines a Hakvoort yacht. Like the YN247 it is intended for a Russian client.

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Pamela V



order backlog, Hakvoort has found the market for new orders difficult: "Until about eight months ago the market was almost dead. We had enquiries but clients walked away if they got a quote

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"A lot of our clients at the moment are from Russia, which I think is quite neat," Albert says. "We work a lot with brokers and both YN247 and YN248 were secured through a broker. It is impossible to know all the available clients – we are too small for that – so working with brokers worldwide brings us a lot of work. At this moment, Russian owners are the most active. Without them the market would have completely stopped so we are lucky to have their business."

The vessel refit is a possible project currently being tendered.

The work will be on a semi-complete yacht that has languished in a Brazilian shipyard for nearly four and a half years. Should Hakvoort win the tender its task will be to transport the yacht back to Europe, analyse what work will need to be carried out, and complete it to the highest standards possible. Though not yet a secured contract, Hakvoort is one of only a few companies that has been approached by the owner and was chosen for its reputation for quality.

Albert goes on to discuss how, despite being kept busy with its

they weren't interested in – but this was the same for all yards. Usually when quoting we are in a race with two or three other yards and the client will pick one in the end but for a long time, due to the economic situation, owners wouldn't choose any yard. They would just postpone the project.

"That changed about eight months ago when we saw business picking up again with a lot of enquiries with many resulting in a project. We signed the order for the YN248, for example, as well as a letter of intent for a 63-metre

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yacht with the contract itself to be signed imminently. The 30-metre Brazilian refit is the result of this renewed activity as well. Business appears to be picking up for now and we hope that will continue throughout 2013."

The managing director concludes with an outline of his hopes for the long-term future of Hakvoort: "As a shipyard we must follow the demands of the market so it is difficult to say exactly what

might happen. We have purchased land next to the yard and are still planning what we can do with that. The enlargement of our main shed and installation of a new slipway were very good moves so the next step may be to upgrade the smaller shed as well. As an old fishing boat builder we still believe in saving money then spending it rather than going to the banks for loans, so our primary focus is to save money then see what the market wants when we are ready." ♦



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