

The Superyacht

TRUTH • OPINION KNOWLEDGE • IDEAS AND EXPERT INDUSTRY ANALYSIS



REPORT

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

The Superyacht Intelligence Agency looks at what makes a good refit yard.

REGIONAL REPORT

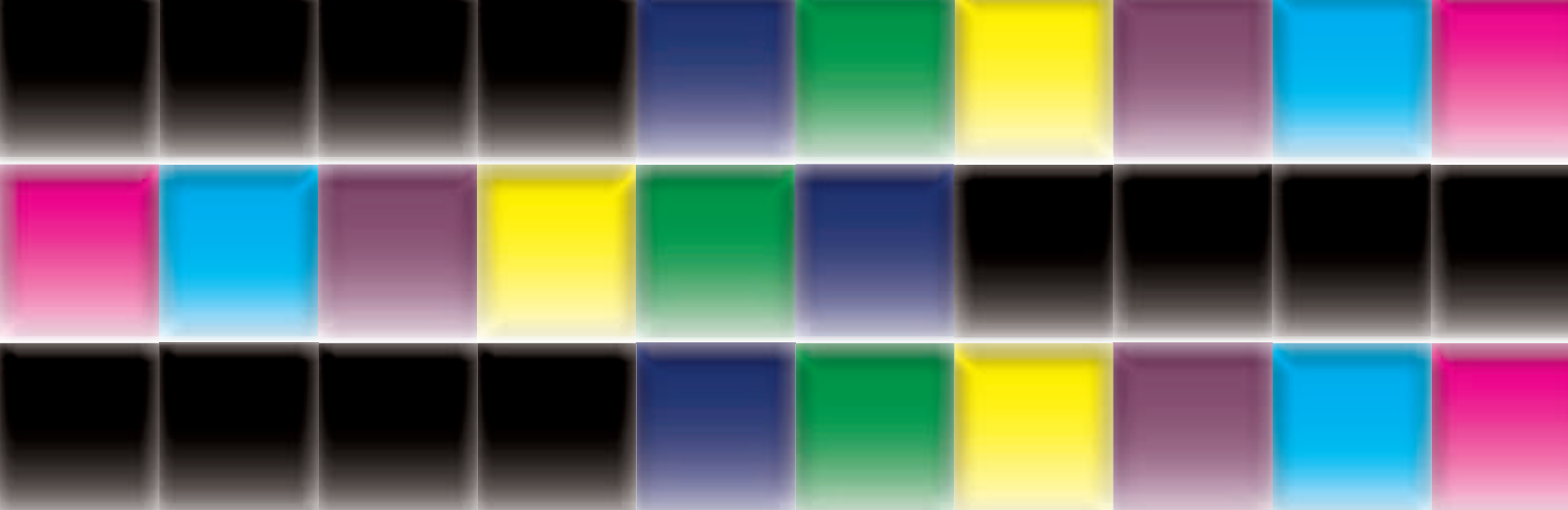
TSR visits the refit hub of the south of France to report on the market.

SUPERYACHT INDUSTRIALISTS

MB'92 CEO Pepe García-Aubert discusses Dogus Group's recent investment, and the refit market.

PAINTING BY NUMBERS

Will creating a baseline standard address the real issues in paint application?



1 2 3 4 5 3 4 6 7 8 PAIN TING BY 4 9 10 7 11 12 13 NUMBERS

Paint has traditionally been a minefield for new and refitted superyachts alike. By creating a baseline standard, the industry is making moves to take subjectivity out of the equation, but does it address the real issues? **Tim Thomas** investigates.

“**W**hen a yard says ‘superyacht quality’, what does that mean?” asks Tony Allen, partner at law firm Hill Dickinson. “In most areas it’s quite difficult to define, but in paint it’s very difficult.” It is something that the International Council of Marine Industry Associations (ICOMIA) has been keen to address, and with the formation of the Superyacht Coatings Applicators Group in 2011 ICOMIA has made headway towards producing a baseline standard to introduce ‘consistent and objective paint measurement’.

ICOMIA has also developed the Technical Guideline on Minimum Acceptable Finish and Appearance for Super Yacht Gloss Coatings (originally published in 2011 and due to be revised later this year), essentially a ‘quality guideline’ that provides the benchmark for applicators, yards and owners’ teams based on target figures for measurements such as gloss, distinction of image (DOI), dust inclusion and other elements. Following industry expert consultation, this guideline has the intention of supporting yards and applicators within the superyacht sector “in defining their own quality by establishing a baseline standard”. Furthermore, ICOMIA has also launched a new Registered Marine Coatings Inspector course, delivered by the International Institute

of Marine Surveyors (IIMS). In addition, it has sought to address the issue of changing paint formulations by delivering superyacht-product-related technical data supplied by the paint manufacturers themselves to the industry at large.

Alongside the ICOMIA guideline there has been a lot of talk of ISO 11347. Ken Hickling, paint industry superyacht specialist and member of the ISO TC8/SC12 Working Group 5, which has been working on the new paint application standard, is quick to point out that ISO 11347 is just one of many paint standards that already exist. “I prefer to talk about what make things good rather than what makes things bad,” he begins. “There are a lot of contributing factors that different people think are the drivers for quality, whether it’s the people doing the job, buying the right instrument, using an independent paint inspector and so on. Ultimately it boils down to two questions: what do you want and how will you know when you get it? People generally want to specify three things: that it will look good, whatever that means for them; that they will know how long it will stay looking good; and possibly that they’ve got what they paid for [in terms of the quality versus cost ratio].”



“There are a lot of contributing factors that different people think are the drivers for quality. Ultimately it boils down to two questions: what do you want and how will you know when you get it?”
– Ken Hickling

“The thing with ISO is that there are a lot of ISO standards for paint,” he continues, “but when people talk about the superyacht ISO standard they’re referring to 11347, which is specifically for measuring the visual appearance. Is it glossy, does it have brush marks or orange peel, is it fair? Well here’s [how to measure] the number.” Hickling likens it to determining the relative speed of yachts. “We can tell if a yacht is fast by measuring speed and representing it in a unit that we know. If we said a yacht did 37m/s, we wouldn’t know if that was fast or slow, so we use knots. This is what ISO 11347 was all about – to define what the units are. It doesn’t tell anyone what fast or slow is, because that will come down to people’s own opinion. ISO 11347 is actually several years old and has been used in a lot of people’s contracts as the method of measurement. ICOMIA took the units and parameters outlined in ISO 11347 and cherry-picked the ones that were most emotive, and said here’s

a threshold level, and if a paint job is less than this it’s rubbish. If you achieve the baseline level you’ve got a fairly unattractive superyacht but it isn’t a total disaster. The idea was you set the baseline and you can compare two vendors using these parameters – they can do ICOMIA plus this or that much – and it helps understand why you might pay more for one or other contractor.”

ICOMIA’s big push has been that attempt to define a baseline paint standard that both yards and applicators can refer to, and Hickling points out that it has had some utility in helping people to start talking about numbers as a starting point of reference. Moreover, Hickling points out that Working Group 5, which considers quality in all aspects of the superyacht industry, has also turned its attention to the actual process of painting rather than just the measurement of the result. In fact, in November 2015 ISO presented the first draft of its superyacht paint process document to its international review

LET
YOUR
IMAGINATION
RUN
WILD...

“We see a number of new builds with fairing problems that are not necessarily down to the applicators themselves but due to the combination of ambient conditions and time pressures.”

– Ritvan Metso, Thraki Yacht Painting

members for consultation. They also took the opportunity at the Global Superyacht Forum 2015 to have direct industry feedback via a well-attended workshop session.

As both an independent paint contractor and a member of the ICOMIA applicators group, Ritvan Metso of Thraki Yacht Painting has a particular take both on the paint process and the new standard. “I think it is a common belief that the paint industry is directed with subjectivity,” he says, “and this ICOMIA standard is a valuable effort to balance that subjectivity. But what I have noticed is that not that many yards are able to provide all the necessary logistics in terms of facilities and climatic conditions, yet the promise for ‘the best paint job’ is there. But with this in the paint specification we can come to a

middle ground where we can measure paint objectively and communicate with the owner transparently for what is the minimum achievable prior to signing the contract.”

Part of the problem stems from the conditions that paint teams sometimes have to work in, both in terms of environmental control and in terms of timescale. In fact, we all know an improvement in facilities is going to be a big plus. “It’s a painful and complicated issue, especially in the large-yacht sector,” Metso says. “I think we all, as an industry, have to encourage yards to invest in better conditions, and this would give much higher quality and quicker deliveries due to fewer paint issues during the outfitting process, and that would automatically mean happier owners. Beyond that,” Metso explains, “timescale

AWLGRIP

The world’s finest yachts require the most distinctive and long-lasting finish.

For that reason Awlgrip developed a revolutionary new topcoat as part of a tailor-made high-gloss paint system.

The result is a fast-drying and easy to apply topcoat that comes in a limitless color palette of solids, metallics and luxurious effects only bound by your imagination.



 www.awlgrip.com

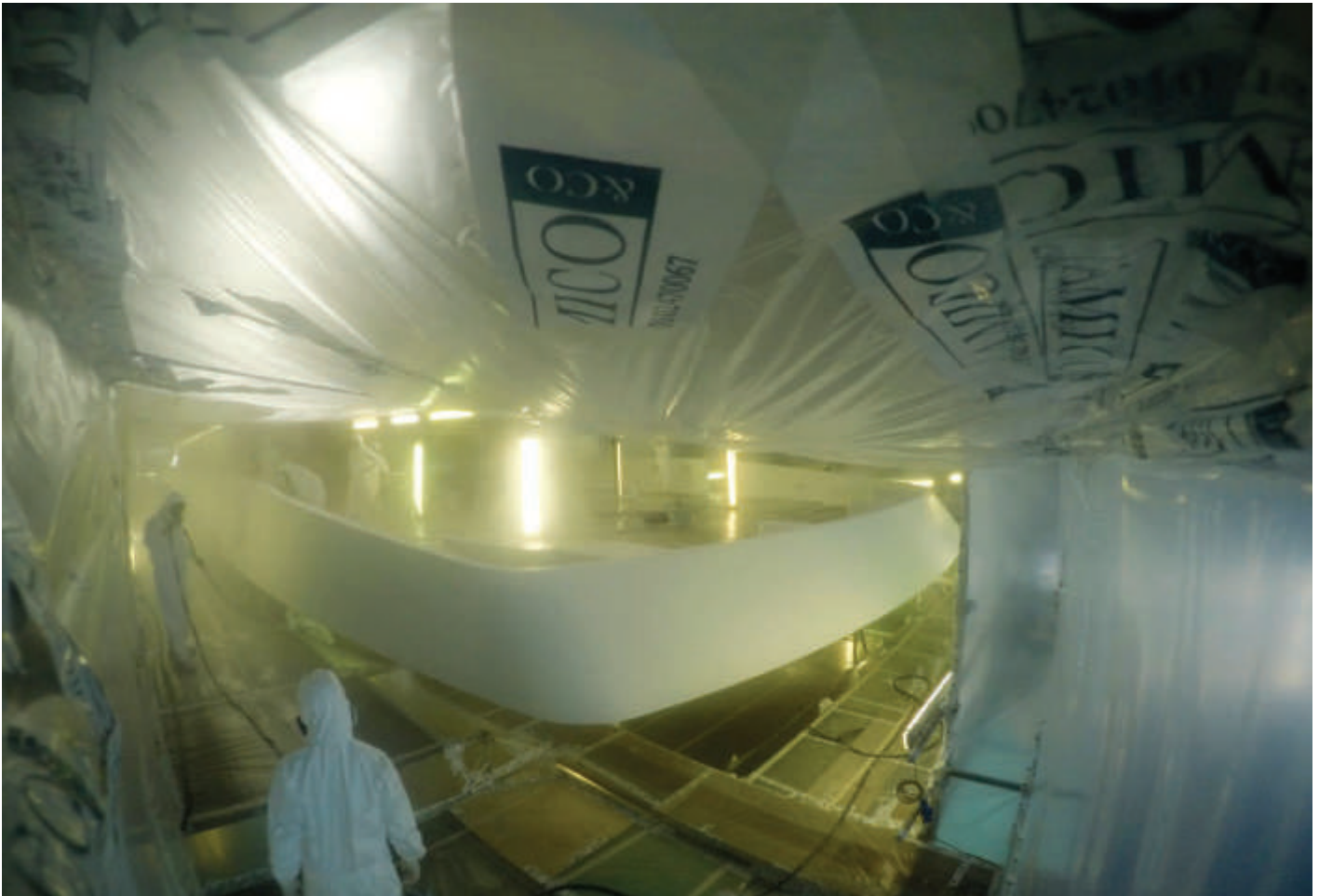
 facebook.com/awlgripfinishfirst

 twitter.com/awlgrip

AkzoNobel

All trademarks mentioned are owned by, or licensed to, the AkzoNobel group of companies.
© AkzoNobel 2016.





is an issue because you're talking about chemistry. We all know you can apply a second coat of filler the next day if you have the right ambient conditions, but we all know that the fairing compound needs to cure for a good while. So the quickest finishing of a paint job is also the most vulnerable in terms of curing times, and we see a number of new builds with fairing problems that are not necessarily down to the applicators themselves but due to the combination of ambient conditions and time pressures."

For Alberto Amico, chairman of the Amico & Co yard in Italy, developing appropriate facilities for painting has been a prime target, and he is quick to point out that having the right facilities can in fact lower the cost of paint jobs for clients. "All of our sheds and covered dry docks are fitted with heating, ventilation, air filtration and humidity control, providing proper application conditions," he explains. "Comparatively, custom building a tent costs two or three times as much, and on top of that you still have to fit all the technical systems to get the optimum conditions. If you have to do that for each paint job it adds a lot of money."

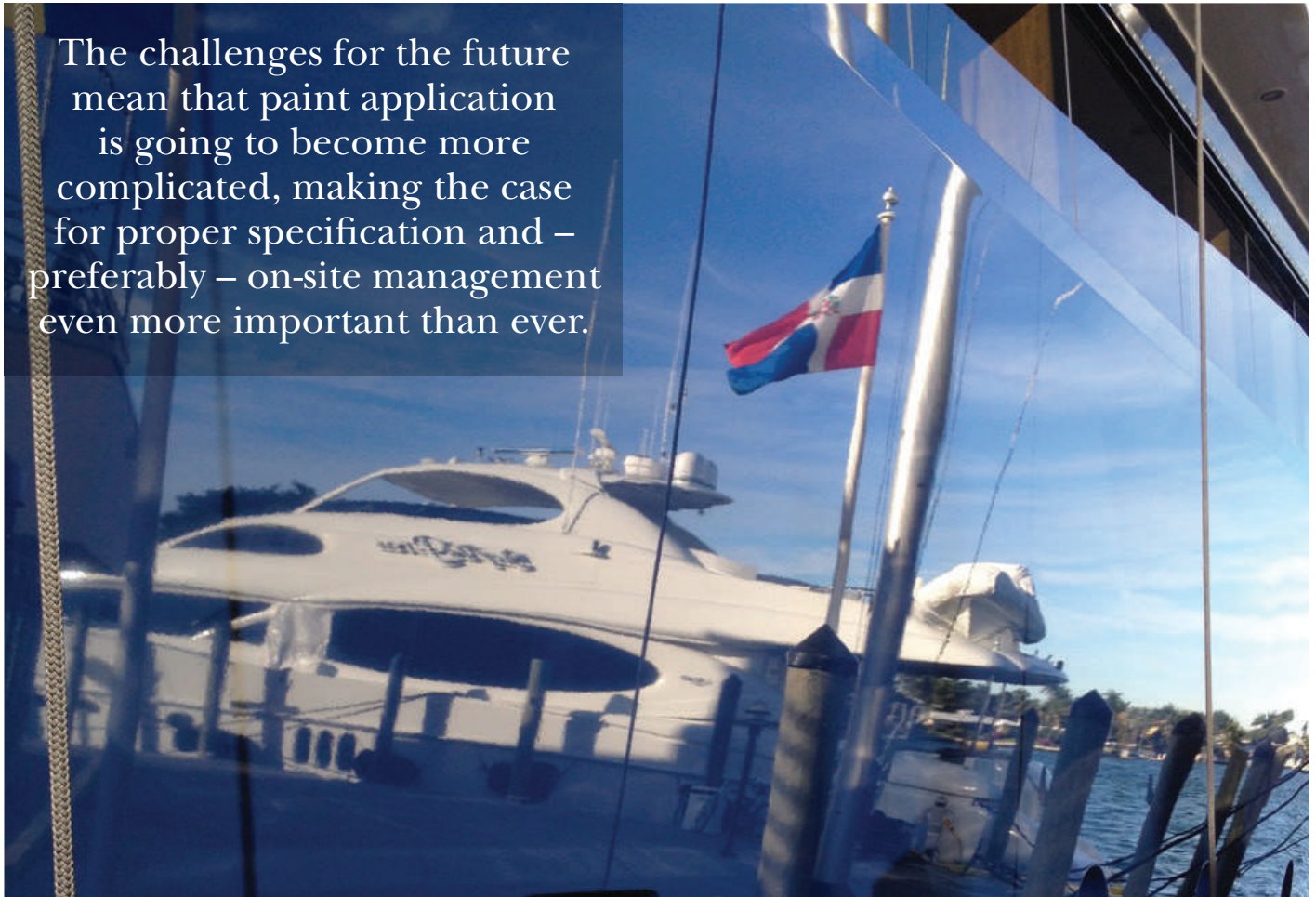
The issue of climatic conditions harks back to what has traditionally been the minefield of

“Owners should look at the small print and ensure that issues over which they have no control (conditions of application, curing times, etc) do not appear as restrictions on the owner’s contractual rights.”

– Tony Allen, partner, Hill Dickinson

litigation that can be created when a paint job goes wrong or when an owner’s expectations aren’t met. “As lawyers, it is in the nature of paint that you haven’t just got one target,” says Allen. “While the owner may be in contract with the yard, behind the yard there’s an applicator – often a subcontractor – and then there’s both the paint supplier and the paint manufacturer. This can lead to four- or five-way arbitration or litigation, which can be very frustrating and very costly. It’s not very healthy for the industry when owners find that their ‘pleasurable’ spend of cash ends up just like their business disputes.”

The challenges for the future mean that paint application is going to become more complicated, making the case for proper specification and – preferably – on-site management even more important than ever.



In addition, yards will frequently offer an insurance bond to an owner, which may limit the scope of the yard's paint warranty. "Owners should look at the small print and ensure that issues over which they have no control (conditions of application, curing times, etc) do not appear as restrictions on the owner's contractual rights," advises Allen.

"Third-party insurance is a good thing, taking into consideration the value of the paint application," offers Paul Bournas, managing director of CCS Yacht Coatings Services. "I think it's the right way to go. Before you actually start, with insurance everything should be clear in writing and there will be a paint surveyor on the job for the insurance company to ensure the paint is applied according to specification. This will give peace of mind if paint failures may occur at a later stage in terms of rust, rapid loss of gloss, colour deterioration, flaking, etc."

The logical solution, then, would be to bring in an independent paint expert at the start of the process who can not only advise on contract terms, including acceptance criteria, but also monitor the paint process from the build of the hull right through to the top coat. Bournas estimates that less than 10 per cent of new builds have a paint surveyor

"A lot of aggravation and irritation, a lot of the smoke and mirrors, can be taken away with a paint surveyor, and I think that will help everyone."

**– Paul Bournas, managing director,
CCS Yacht Coatings Services**

involved, and he sees this as a major oversight on the part of build management teams.

"When you consider that for an 80-metre project the paint and application costs are roughly 10 to 15 per cent of the new build value, it's going to cost you less than one per cent of that amount (or 0.1 per cent of total build cost) to employ a surveyor," he says.

"It's peanuts, and I can show you examples of yachts built without paint surveyors that will not meet anyone's expectations. I feel that a lot of aggravation and irritation, a lot of the smoke and mirrors, can be taken away with a paint surveyor, and I think that will help everyone."

It's not just owners who can benefit from having an expert on hand during the painting process. "We're working on a yacht at the moment where the subcontractor didn't have experience of painting yachts of the size of this project, and the yard is now having to spend over a million euros to rectify problems that were caused by poor workmanship

or 15 years ago was easier to apply than it is nowadays. And that, in combination with build time, exotic colours and features, means it's getting more complicated."

Metso identifies four key elements that he thinks are crucial in the paint process, especially for new-builds. "First, before the paint process starts, it would be good

"What will ensure longevity in this industry is that we must have our own moral responsibility to be transparent – what doesn't look good to our eyes won't look good to an owner. I think we owe that to owners, because without them our market wouldn't exist."

– Ritvan Metso, Thraki Yacht Painting

from the subcontractor," Bournas adds. "If they'd had a surveyor he could have pointed out that it wasn't going in the right direction and advised the yard or subcontractors, so immediate action could have been taken and it would most probably have prevented a claim at a later stage."

The problem is exacerbated as new exotic colours and finishes grow in popularity. The challenges of metallic paints, for example, extend not only to their initial application but also to the process of rectifying things if there's a problem. "If you're spraying an area white and something goes wrong in the process you can step in and rectify it," Bournas says. "With metallic paint it's more complicated, particularly for things like panel or spot repairs. And if you get any mottling the only way to get rid of it is to respray the entire area or hull side."

The challenges for the future mean that paint application is going to become more complicated, making the case for proper specification and – preferably – on-site management even more important than ever. "Because the legislation is changing on VOC (volatile organic compound) products used in paint, you'll see the tolerances becoming narrower for surface preparation and application," says Bournas, "so paint 10

to have an applicator present during the shipbuilding phase to guide the yard through unnecessary hull deflections," he says. "Second, we need more time. The requirement for unbelievably quick paint jobs doesn't allow filler to cure enough. Third, there should be more use of longboarding in the fairing process. It's painful and tiring but it gives the best results. And finally," he emphasises, "what will ensure longevity in this industry is that we must have our own moral responsibility to be transparent – what doesn't look good to our eyes won't look good to an owner. I think we owe that to owners, because without them our market wouldn't exist."

The question, of course, is whether ISO 11347 or ICOMIA guidelines will make a substantial difference in themselves. "We talk about ICOMIA, but on a scale of one to 10, where one is lousy and 10 is fantastic, the ICOMIA guideline is approximately a six," comments Bournas. "But if you're talking about some of the top yards they are at an eight, so in my opinion an ICOMIA standard will not give you the result you might be looking for compared to when you hire someone to guide you through the job or help define acceptance criteria, advise on yards, select where to do the job and manage expectations.

Maximise the asset



MML works with you to optimise all your technical and refit planning whilst maximising the availability of the yacht. Working in partnership with the yacht's own team they manage technical work anywhere in the world, at a cost benefit to you.

Discover MML

Minimise the cost

mml
turn-key marine solutions

www.mml.org.nz | info@mml.org.nz

It definitely has relevance though,” he adds, “but if you don’t have any knowledge of paint standards you might have a false feeling of protection.”

Bournas compares it to the RE rust standard used in commercial shipping. “I had an owner come to me one day saying he had a 10-year guarantee. I asked him what the yard was guaranteeing and he said it was RE6. But that means that over 10 years 40 to 50 per cent of your tank is rusting – that kind of guarantee is useless. So you have to understand what an ICOMIA guideline is and what it stands for, and then again consider if that’s what you are looking for.”

“It does reflect from an applicator point of view what is a minimum achievable standard,” says Metso, “and when you reach this minimum standard, as a painter who has seen all the practical challenges during the process, I feel I have realistically achieved something good. It may help with insurance and claims purposes too, but at the end of the day the motivation is to surpass those numbers, and on many occasions we have succeeded in delivering higher standards.”

“It’s a minimum acceptance criterion, but some might use that minimum as a reference standard in the contract,” adds Amico. “This is a very important point to consider. At Amico & Co, for example, in respect of general acceptance criteria our numbers are higher than the ICOMIA guideline.”

If the ICOMIA guideline serves as a baseline standard to demarcate between an acceptable and a non-acceptable job, it still requires owners, yards and managers to agree on a level of finish that meets an owner’s expectations, and that means considering both detailed acceptance criteria and establishing a target level of finish for each and every job. It is certainly not a cure-all standard that will satisfy the demands of every owner.

It also raises the question of measurement. If you are painting to ICOMIA or a defined standard above that baseline, you still need to be able to gauge accurately whether the acceptance criteria have been met. “Contract negotiations are critical,” says Metso, “but if there is common sense, transparent



communication and goodwill from all parties I don’t think it’s too difficult to agree on a standard. For example, that all parties have to measure with the same brand of equipment or the same device so they can calibrate before measuring the cured surfaces. Calibration should be done in front of all parties to avoid arguments later on.”

Bournas agrees, but suggests taking it a step further. “In Paris you have the official measure of one metre, and everyone is clear what a metre is,” he says. “A new-build yard should have a reference panel as their ‘metre’, and everyone should calibrate their equipment on that panel from the paint surveyor to the yard, the applicator and the manufacturer. Then everyone will know what his or her equipment deviation is. It’s so simple – spray two panels, one white and one dark, put them in a velvet-lined case and then everyone who wants to measure a paint job can calibrate on those plates with 50 measurements. There can be a difference of up to 14 per cent on gloss between devices, which means currently that one paint surveyor might reject what another would accept.”

“On the other hand, what’s leading? Your eye or the measuring equipment?”, Bournas adds. “If you’ve been in the paint business for 10 years and you’ve seen over 200 yachts and you know what a good paint job looks like, I think that counts more; instruments should be used more to check when you have doubt.”

If you are painting to ICOMIA or a defined standard above that baseline, you still need to be able to gauge accurately whether the acceptance criteria have been met.

“Measurement is the easy part of the job, because the way you measure under ISO procedures uses a particular type of instrument, but this has to be certified periodically by a coatings inspector,” says Amico. “Before, however, there were some people who couldn’t or didn’t measure in the right manner, but in general the new systems make measurement less subjective and more objective.”

to perform the job. We are more in favour of the latter, because we have an in-house team and managers with more than 25 years’ experience and that can result in the best specification.”

Amico is clear that there is a set recipe of ingredients, all of which must be included to achieve a great paint job. “You need dedicated facilities with correct environmental conditions, time, good products,

If nothing else, the ICOMIA guidelines should help raise awareness of the importance of specifying paint criteria in advance and highlight some of the issues that can cause quality or warranty issues down the line. But we as an industry must also remember that ICOMIA has simply provided a baseline, and ISO 11347 simply defines the method of measurement – neither give us a standard that reflects the high demands or expectations of most owners and their teams. “It must be helpful to have these guidelines but people mustn’t think it’s the holy grail and that once you’ve referenced the standard in the contract that’s the end of the story,” Allen warns. “It will almost certainly improve standards and therefore reduce the likelihood of paint disputes,” he adds. “Further, it will help with that other issue of defining what we mean when we say ‘superyacht paint standards’, as long as people use it in the right way and don’t just see it as a magic wand that can be waved to create the perfect finish.”

Often the decision is based principally – or even exclusively – on a low-price basis and on ‘sales’ promises.”

**Alberto Amico, chairman,
Amico & Co**

For Amico, the solution lies in applying experience and knowledge. “Our philosophy when it comes to owner expectations is to be very clear about the sort of result they can expect, especially in the refit market. Our reputation shows we care about this, and it’s all about acting as a partner to the owner and not just being a yard that wants to make money out of a paint job. We see that there are two ways of specifying a contract: one way is to do your own survey and specification and get a quote on that specification, but the other way is to ask the yard what, in their experience, is the best way

experience and reputation of the applicators, a reference standard that is adequate and superior to the minimum acceptable industry standard, and transparency with the owner to manage his expectations in terms of what he wants to get from a paint job,” he says. “What actually happens in the real world, at least in 80 per cent of cases, is different,” he adds. “Those ingredients are not taken into consideration, or only partially, for the choice of shipyard, and often the decision is based principally – or even exclusively – on a low-price basis and on ‘sales’ promises.”



TO COMMENT ON THIS ARTICLE,
EMAIL: ISSUE168@SUPERYACHTREPORT.COM
WITH SUBJECT: PAINTING BY NUMBERS

IMAGES SUPPLIED BY AMICO & CO AND CCS

