



## **‘La Repubblica Superba’**

Alberto Amico, chairman at Amico & Co, outlines why a series of subtle changes have bolstered the Ligurian Riviera’s status as a superyacht service and maintenance epicentre.

ABOUT ALBERTO AMICO

**CHAIRMAN**

AMICO & CO

**170M**

LARGEST DRY DOCK  
AT AMICO

**P/Y QUEEN MIRI, 92M**

MOST NOTABLE REFIT

**250KG**

THE TUNA FISH THAT GOT AWAY,  
AFTER A TWO-HOUR BATTLE

## The yachting operations sector has sometimes fallen short in its duty to owners in the superficial way that refit proposals are compared and shipyard tenders awarded.

My business model has developed from our family history. Since the yard was founded 26 years ago, we have focused on developing the cornerstones I believe a shipyard must have: efficient facilities, in-house expertise, motivated management and transparency in dealing with clients. This is what makes a shipyard attractive.

For me, developing commercial relationships is secondary, although I know this may not be the most cunning way of operating. I'm proud to say that our steadily growing client portfolio portrays Amico as a loyal yacht operations partner – our clients consider us to be consistent in terms of reliability and our relationship with them. This is how we want to be, and it's profitable from a business point of view, but only in the long run. Fortunately, we believe we have enough key selling points not to engage in the 'commercial commissions battle'.

My family has built and repaired vessels for more than two centuries, yet the Amico & Co alchemy has always maintained the same three ingredients: passion, professionalism and people. At the end of the 19th century, the introduction of steel and steam engines revolutionised the business and we branched into ship maintenance and servicing. The same family recipe was then applied to the yacht refit and service market, with our transparent and ethical business model, infrastructure innovation and the technical abilities typical to Italian production.

Today, another revolution is underway, with the average LOA of superyachts entering our facilities having doubled

over the past decade. Time is money in commercial chartering, and it is now standard to manoeuvre huge boats into tight spaces in just half a day. And today, we manage more than 110 projects per year, our reputation spread by word of mouth by the satisfied captains with whom Amico is affiliated.

As LOA has grown, so has our reputation, and we proudly co-operate with Italian shipbuilders and iconic build yards such as Oceanco, Feadship, Delta and Heesen, who choose us as a point of reference for quality and refit time standards. We are also an affiliate of Altagamma, which unites the luxury brands made in Italy.

However, it's the people who make the difference at Amico, from our experienced management, in-house foremen and project managers to our multilingual sales staff, project management assistants and expert purchasing department – it is they who forge the customer relationships that last a lifetime. Our production set-up is unique in having in-house departments for the four key skills of engineering, painting, interiors and deck outfitting, bringing expertise and experience advantages while improving time and cost-efficiency.

The future holds some wonderful opportunities. Over the next two years, Amico will continue to evolve as a refit centre, increasing its lifting capability and expanding its facilities by around 10,000m<sup>2</sup>. Genoa, traditionally La Superba, heart of the Genoese republic, has found a new identity as a large-yacht home port. There will be a new transit and home port marina for superyachts, with service and safety

standards paramount, offering the complete spectrum of yacht and crew services and suppliers.

What was once a depressed post-industrial environment has turned full circle, with a sea change of opinion regarding Genoa's waterfront. City administrators and ordinary citizens alike have completely rethought their attitudes towards foreign tourism and the yachting industry. Genoa's proximity to winter sports bases and tourist attractions makes a spell there a treat for crew. New infrastructure and fast train connections are being created, allowing Milan to be reached in 40 minutes, Rome in four hours and Florence in half that, so that the best of Italian culture, gastronomy, shopping and entertainment are easily accessible.

Historically, when it comes to best practice, the yachting operations sector has sometimes fallen short in its duty to owners in the superficial way that refit proposals are compared and shipyard tenders awarded.

Over the past few years, however, we have observed that progressively more yacht managers are being appointed to support and supervise refit and repair activities, taking appropriate care of the design and bidding process before a refit, and acting in tandem with captains and their crew. The whole process is thus becoming less self-referential and more accurate and objective, and consequently more ethical too. In that respect, I see a flourishing future for Amico in the market. The real challenge is to retain a team of people who share the same ideals and motivations in which we believe. **AA**