



Genoa-based Amico has recently invested €7.1 million in a new covered graving dock, upgraded electrics and a 75m deep water pontoon

Remade in Genoa

After a major investment in infrastructure, Italian-based Amico & Co has also completed its largest refit to date

JAKE KAVANAGH REPORTS

Occupying a prime location within the deepwater port of Genoa in northwest Italy, the family-owned repair and refit yard Amico & Co is reaping the rewards of a large inward investment in new quays and construction halls. During *SB's* visit earlier this year, the new 102m covered dock in the technical marina was seeing the closing stages of a major refit of the former 85.2m passenger yacht, *Delma*. Rather like a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis, the yacht that appeared when the concertina cover was rolled back was nothing like the version that had entered some 16 months before. In fact, refit doesn't accurately describe what happened to this Neorion-built vessel. Remade would be better,

and it's a catchy verb that Amico now uses on all its publicity material.

The upgrading and lengthening of *Delma*, now 92m long and renamed *Queen Miri*, was made possible by the vision of the yard's CEO, Luigi Alberto Amico, who invested heavily in a yard that was already very capable. Preferring to be called Alberto, this slim and affable CEO has seen the steady rise in the average size of superyachts, and also noticed the impatience of owners to get a refit turned around as

quickly as possible, especially when their yacht is offered for charter. By providing a greater range of covered facilities, and also the ability to achieve more "quayside" refits, his yard would be able to attract more clients with superyachts in the 60m-100m range.

Early roots

The business can trace its heritage back to the turn of the 18th century, when master

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shipwright Matteo Amico set up a yard at Loano, a coastal town about 80km (50 miles) west of Genoa. When the adoption of steam propulsion caused a surge in steel shipbuilding, Michele Amico, a descendant of Matteo, relocated the yard to the larger and more accessible port of Genoa. His son Luigi registered the yard as a harbour company in 1920, where it specialised in all aspects of ship repair, engineering and refit.

In the late 1980s, Guido Amico applied to the port authorities for permission to open a new yard within the harbour, but this time dedicated solely to the repair and maintenance of large leisure yachts. This was a natural step for the company, as it was already supporting many of the major shipping lines such as MSC, Costa and Carnival as a preferred supplier for anti-corrosion treatments and paint finishes. However, at the time, there was little to support the growing yachting industry, especially the largest yachts, so the Amico family knew they had found a niche.

In 1991, Guido and Alberto located a vacant plot of land to the east of the harbour, and established Amico & Co. The ongoing



Amico's yard, located towards the bottom of this picture, has excellent access from the Mediterranean

success of the Genoa operation soon necessitated the opening of a second operation for yachts of up to 55m. As a result, in 2000 the company invested in a new facility in the restructured harbour at Loano, where the whole ship repair enterprise had started in 1799.

Planning ahead

We first toured both yards back in 2013, when a further increase in the already impressive infrastructure was being planned, so it was very interesting to see how Amico & Co had put these plans into action.

During our earlier visit, Alberto Amico had told us, "Yachts are definitely getting bigger. We've lost some of the smaller ones, but

TOP VIEW LUIGI ALBERTO AMICO CEO AMICO & CO

Luigi Alberto Amico was born into the family business, and as a child he helped his father around the shipyard, and went sailing on the family yacht. He graduated as an electrical engineer in 1988 and in 1991 he co-founded the refit business at its new location, and immediately set about establishing efficient management practices and construction halls that allowed him to undercut rival paint finishers by up to 20 per cent, while still matching them on quality. Amico has been instrumental in steering the latest tranche of new infrastructure projects.

"When we launched in 1991, we were addressing a mainly Italian market," Amico says. "Only 20 per cent of our clients were from elsewhere. Now the balance has shifted, and only around 5 per cent of our clients are from the domestic market. They are part of the 50 per cent of our customer base that is European, and the rest comes from all over the world, most notably Asia and the Americas. We are certainly seeing a big change in the average size of yacht. We enjoy a lot of



Luigi Alberto Amico is also a qualified electrical engineer

this makes us available to receive more yachts at any one time. Whilst we are also expanding our infrastructure on the hardstanding, we are also looking outside the yard gates at the services in the town and in the local marinas. You have to provide a 360° service to the yacht and the crew. In between the season, the time available for refit or maintenance is becoming smaller

An owner dreaming about a custom made yacht can see it delivered in 20 months at the maximum, instead of a new build taking 40 months

repeat business, with a big growth in yachts in the 60m bracket. Two years ago, I would say that this sector of the market amounted to around 20 per cent new contracts, but now it is more like 40-50 per cent. In respect of that, we are considering a new period of expansion in infrastructure, even though we have only just completed a big expansion project. The reality of this market is that it is very dynamic, and still very young, even though the average age of the fleet is interesting from a refit point of view. The market is moving forward very fast, and it is not easy for any yard to follow the trends.

"We've just finished our new dry dock, shed and mooring area. The latter is important, because on these large yachts you can do an efficient refit job with the yacht afloat, and with additional quayside

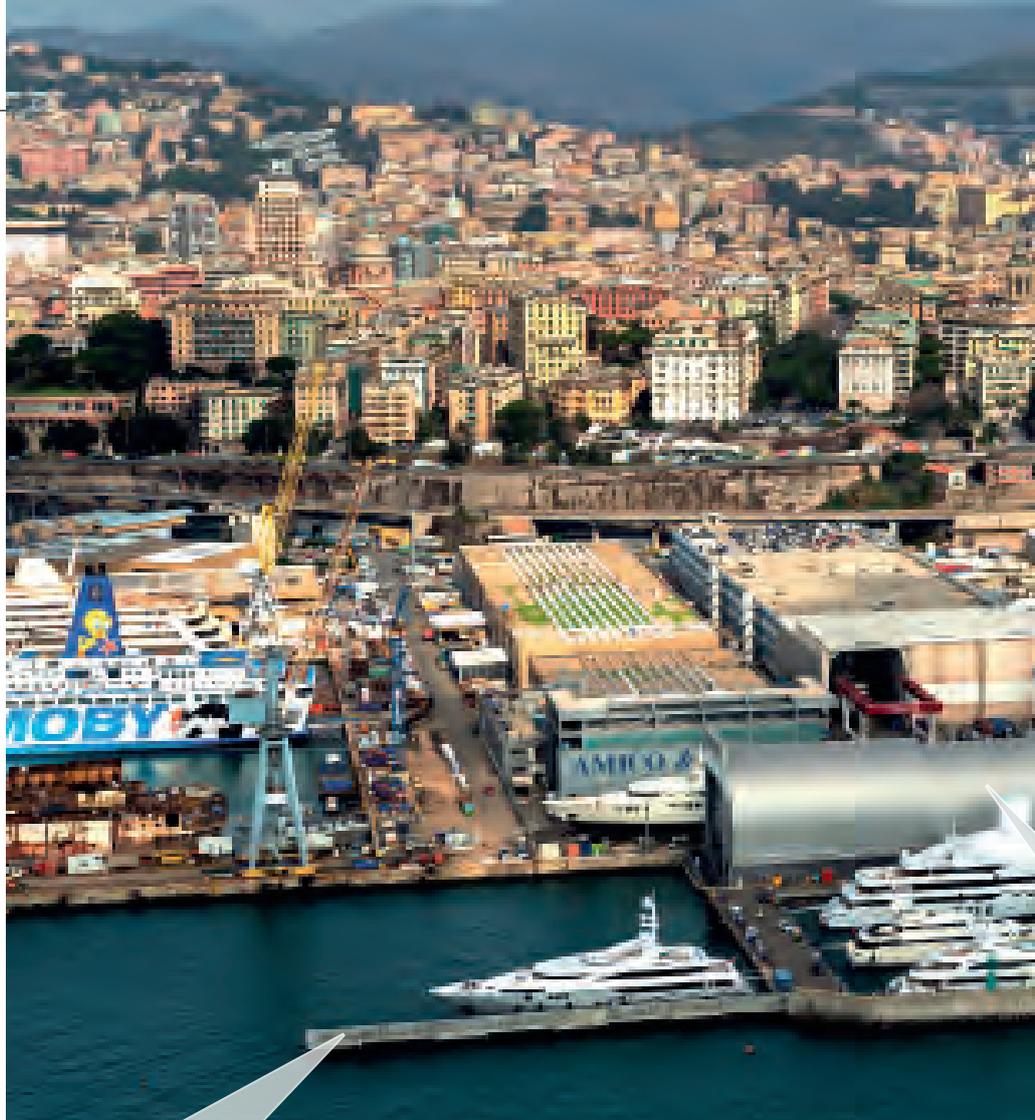
and smaller. It's almost the same scenario we have seen with passenger vessels. Nowadays, these commercial vessels have a shipyard period of just 10 days every two or three years. We are far from that in the yachting sector, but we are getting closer.

"Looking ahead – the big yacht conversion project makes sense, and we are showing this to owners, managers and brokers with the delivery of the former *Delma* to the market. This is interesting, as an owner dreaming about his own custom made yacht can see it delivered in 15 months, say 20 months at the maximum, instead of a new build taking 40 months. It's not easy to find a boat that is ideally suited for refitting, but even with a boat that is not good to start with, it will be very good by the time we have finished." **SB**



DRY DOCK 2

Amico & Co improved the nearby No 2 dock, which they control and sublet from the port. The old cover needed replacing, so the yard decided that it should be upgraded and replaced with a much more modern version. The climate control systems inside were also greatly enhanced.



EXPANDED MARINA

The new pier is able to support road tankers and cranes. The 20,000m² technical marina caters for floating refits for superyachts over 100m. The three-phase electrical system was upgraded, and a further 76m of deepwater docking was added on the western side to allow for more alongside berthing.

the 50m sector is still strong, and the 70m-plus sector continues to grow. Our new graving dock will allow us to move more towards the segment of the market that appreciates our reputation. We are in a strong position to gain more volume from other yards, despite the increasing competition, and part of our strategy will be to continue investing in new infrastructure to allow us to be even more efficient in the future.”

His vision paid off, because the yard remains extremely – and consistently – busy,

greatly helped by the new facilities. The new builds of the world’s fleet are steadily growing longer, so there is greater demand on yards that can accommodate them.

The Genoa facility is easily accessible from the sea and very close to the historic city’s elderly and slightly tired Cristoforo Colombo airport, which has its own terminal for private jets. Approaching the yard by road means penetrating a well-guarded security perimeter around the extensive docks, with further security at the gates to the yard, so owners

having their yachts restored are well protected from unwelcome guests. However, the yard is also close enough to the tourist centre of Genoa to allow crews to walk there for an evening’s entertainment, although Amico has been at pains to improve the on-site facilities for those staying with their yacht.

As there is an average of 25 separate refit projects taking place at any one time, with a total capacity of around 35, another recent introduction has been the recruitment of a full-time, multi-lingual concierge. Her task is to keep a motherly eye on the 200 or more crewmembers that could be on site during peak periods, and arrange everything they need, from a local dentist to daily car hire. They also have their own crew room with cooking and toilet facilities, plus the lifeblood of the modern crewmember, access to broadband internet.

We are in a strong position to gain more volume from other yards, despite the increasing competition, and our strategy will be to continue investing



AMIS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Amico has a rolling programme of management analysis, designed by Alberto Amico himself. This system works on the premise that there are lessons to be learnt from every job, and there is crossover between the commercial shipbuilding side of the business and the yachting sector. Accessible across the company, AMIS seeks to assist in correctly pricing each job, engage the right contractors, and allocate resources with a minimum of waste.



COVERED GRAVING DOCK

The 102m graving dock was created at a cost of €6 million, and involved dredging and resealing of the floor. A new gate was installed, and then the space covered with a rolling roof, similar in concept to that at the nearby Dry Dock 2.

of up to 110m, moored mostly stern-to and with all the hook-ups required. These include the obligatory three-phase power, with the hubs recently modified as part of a €1.1 million upgrade to meet higher loads from larger vessels. Freshwater connection and pump out facilities are available at each berth, and to accommodate all types of deliveries and engineering works, the wide, reinforced quayside easily supports heavy goods vehicles, mobile cranes and fuel tankers. Around eight of the berths are located across the water, inside a road-topped outer breakwater, a location favoured by owners who wish for a bit more privacy.

During our visit one such yacht was almost completely isolated at the far end, and we had strict instructions not to approach it, nor to take any photographs, even accidentally as background. “The owner greatly values his privacy,” explained our guide, technical director Filippo Censi Buffarini. “The yacht can be refitted and maintained afloat in this location, as it can be reached by all the necessary heavy equipment, but remains suitably isolated. We place a great emphasis on meeting our clients’ requests, which is why we get so much repeat business.” In this case, even the yacht’s name was obscured, and only the project number was used around the yard. Clearly, Amico takes client confidentiality very seriously.

In the three years since our last visit to the 30,000m² site, Amico has spent some 

Covering the docks

Although not much has changed to the existing geography of the infrastructure since 2013, what was already there has been greatly improved. The new graving dock, for example, sports a huge ‘armadillo’ style roof, and opposite the technical marina, is a brand new concrete pontoon stretching 75m out to the west.

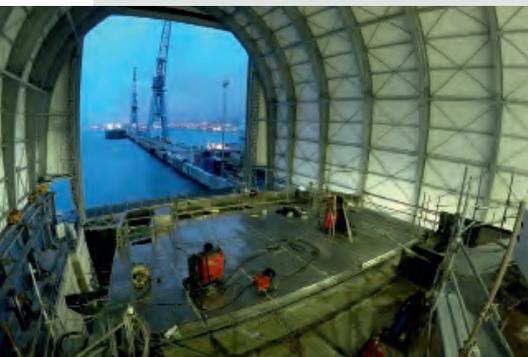
The Amico yard is designed around a central area of reinforced hardstanding, covering a large area able to support vessels of up to 60m. This quadrant is served by an 835-ton mobile travel hoist, still the largest in Europe, and supplemented by a smaller hoist of 320 tons and a regiment of self-propelled cranes and cherry pickers. The large, aluminium-clad offices and workshops, built recently as part of the €7.1 million spent on infrastructure to date, flank the western side of the yard, with a further set of three covered paint sheds enclosing the northern perimeter. For owners that wish to refit their yachts afloat, the 20,000m² technical marina to the south of the yard provides 20 berths for yachts

The yard runs the largest travel lift in Europe (835 ton)



METALWORK

With a long ship-repair heritage, a dedicated in-house fabrication team and trusted subcontractors within the port, Amico sourced all the major steel fabrication locally. To remodel and lengthen the yacht, a 16m section of the hull was cut back, and a new flooded tender garage installed. This garage can also be turned into a heated swimming pool. Her aluminium superstructure was restyled by the Dutch studio Bernd Weel Design.



Remaking *Delma*

€7.1m on infrastructure upgrades. The first, and most striking, investment was the new €6m graving dock, tucked into the corner of the technical marina. Originally, this sheltered marina had an open-air gated berth where it adjoined the hardstanding, but management decided to give this dock a sliding cover.

The works were carried out by local contractors, and involved dredging the bottom and then sealing it. The sides of the dock were also modified, and a new gate was added before the dock was drained for finishing works. The concertina roof was built in three major sections, that could slide completely over the project, and also open where required for any exterior crane works.

The final element was a full climate-control



The engineering team has a lot of experience with repowering classics

JOINERY

Amico has a strong reputation for the skill of its joinery department. With a combination of on-site workshops and local companies, *Delma's* interior – which remains a closely guarded secret – is said to have undergone a major transformation, with more than 80 per cent of it upgraded.



system, to allow spray painting works all year round. The build was completed during the yachting season, when the yard was at its quietest, and the cranes could move more freely beside the build.

At the same time, Amico also upgraded the nearby No2 dock, over which they have control by subletting from the port. Whilst this subdivided 200m (l) x 17m (w) x 29m (h) dock already had a similar type of roof, it was replaced with a more modern, futureproof version, and the climate-control systems inside were upgraded.

The most recent addition has been the new deep water quay, which was completed early in 2016. This new quay allows vessels to berth alongside with the minimum of manoeuvring, particularly useful if under tow, or in poor weather conditions.

Rebuilding *Delma*

Almost as soon as the new graving dock was completed, it played host to Amico's biggest and most complex refit to date, the 85m *Delma* project. Built in 2004 and formerly the *Annaliese*, the yacht arrived in November 2014 for a complete restyling. This would involve cutting deep into the steel hull, and inserting a whole new stern section, lengthening the yacht to 91.5m, whilst also replacing both main engines and all three generators. The plans, which evolved as the project progressed, included major changes to the superstructure, a new beach area on the aft deck, and a rearrangement and refurbishment of around 80 per cent of the entire interior décor. As another technical challenge, the tender bay would convert into a swimming pool. In total, this was a mammoth



ENGINEERING

Amico's engineering team tackled the mammoth task of removing both of *Delma's* main engines and replacing them with a pair of MTU 20V 4000 M93l engines, requiring considerable restructuring to the bearers. Three MTU generators were also replaced. The new machinery and longer length has increased the top speed by around one knot.



PAINTING

The yard specialises in high quality finishes, particularly on classic yachts which have greater challenges than the more stable metal substrates. In *Delma's* case, the new shed was used to cocoon the hull for a complete respray and colour change, including matching parallel lines along the bulwark.

owners, so they could decide if the changes were practical and acceptable."

Whilst Amico & Co knew the depth of the project from the outset, the actual production design continued right through the build process. This could possibly have disrupted lesser yards, but the management system coped well. "I would say that between 40-50 per cent was added to the original design during the actual refit," Alberto said. "To manage this is only possible if you have full control of what you are doing. You have to have great flexibility throughout the workforce. We have 30 companies that we have been working with for decades, and this was a major factor in the project's success."

Alberto explained that the project was broken up into key areas, and each was managed independently as a separate enterprise, but with open lines of communication with the others. "You need close coordination," he said. "We have always trained ourselves to do this, so with *Delma* it was like working on 25 individual projects simultaneously, but all within one yacht. We used all our experience and training to make this happen."

As the end result floated free of her cocoon in April 2016, it was clear to all that the refit had been a total success. Amico & Co is testimony to what is possible when you have the right management structures, a focus on craftsmanship and an ongoing investment in infrastructure. **S3**

Teamwork is the winning factor. We could manage a complex project that was actually still being designed during the build process

job, but due to Amico's advanced management structure, its dedicated on-site workforce and more than 30 trusted partner companies, the whole project was achieved in record time.

"Luckily, our new facility was immediately available," explained Alberto Amico. "However, it's teamwork that is the winning factor when dealing with a project of this complexity, combined with experience, and the efficiency of the whole system." This efficiency is demonstrated in Amico's unique management system, developed by Alberto

himself. The system learns exponentially from previous projects, both commercial and leisure, and looks for any cost savings and efficiency drives in each new task. The data is shared across all departments, and was a key factor in streamlining and coordinating the various tasks.

"We could manage a complex project that was actually still being designed during the build process. That was a big challenge in terms of flexibility, and also in terms of prompt answers that we could give to the



REMAKING OF *DELMA* INTO *QUEEN MIRI*

This 16-month project took place in the shipyard's new 102m covered dry dock, which was inaugurated in November 2014. It was the largest and most extensive refit ever completed by Amico & Co, and one of the largest of its type ever attempted. It involved nine full-time project managers, with 200 personnel on the project at any one time. The hull was lengthened from 85m to 91.5m, with a complete upgrade of

the two main engines and three generators. The stern was cut back by 16.5m to create a new section with hydrodynamic adjustments. The new engines needed reconstructed foundations, shaft realignment, new rudder stocks and exhaust runs. Special design features were incorporated into the external and interior design to provide "outstanding comfort and amenities".

NEW SPEC

(previous spec in brackets)

- ▶ **Length:** 91.5m (85.3m)
- ▶ **Beam:** 14.4m (14.4m)
- ▶ **Draft:** 4.2m (4.2m)
- ▶ **Tonnage:** 3,420 tonnes
- ▶ **Engines:** 2 x MTU 20V 4000 M93L (Cat 3606)
- ▶ **Top speed:** 18 knots (17 knots)
- ▶ **Range:** Around 7,000 miles @ 15 knots

REFIT PROJECTS

AMICO LOANO



Catering for vessels of up to 55m, Amico & Co has a second refit and maintenance facility at Loano, about 80km (50 miles) up the coast. Loano marina has an exclusive yacht club and several superyacht berths within its sheltered breakwaters, and the Amico facility has 8,500m² of hardstanding and a 550-ton travel lift.

A series of specialist workshops on site provide engineering, electrical, metalwork and joinery services, and there is 2,000m² of covered space for vessels of up to 22m.

REFIT PROJECTS 2015-2016

The Genoa facility completes over 150 projects a year, both power and sail, with up to 35 on site at any one time. This is just a small selection to show the range of sizes and works.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 45m Motoryacht | Full paint works and five-year survey |
| 54m Motoryacht | Superstructure paint works, metal/mechanical work |
| 38m Motoryacht | Structural modifications, including installation of faux funnel |
| 72m Motoryacht | Topsides hull painting with metallic finish |
| 47m Motoryacht | New engines and gearboxes, and hull repainting |
| 64m Motoryacht | Partial restructuring with hull topsides repainting |

LOCATIONS

Genoa

44.395297, 8.932732
+44° 23' 43.07", +8° 55' 57.84"

Loano

44.136237, 8.267914
+44° 8' 10.45", +8° 16' 4.49"

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