

ALEXSEAL Yacht Coatings

MANKIEWICZ BRINGS GERMAN ENGINEERING TO YACHT COATINGS.



For more than 100 years Mankiewicz has been on the forefront of paint technology. The German company began by manufacturing high-quality paints for stagecoaches before moving onto machinery, automobile interiors and commercial airliners. All of these applications place Mankiewicz's paint finishes under extreme conditions, from the wear and tear of industrial machinery, to harsh UV rays that attack smolderingly hot car interiors, to the temperature extremes and

abrupt changes in atmospheric pressure experienced by airplanes, and require the company to utilize the latest technological advances in its formulas. In 2002, Mankiewicz decided to parlay its expertise in extreme environments into the maritime market with the development of the ALEXSEAL family of yacht coatings.

"Traditionally, yacht coatings came out of the aviation industry," says Tripp Nelson, director of marketing

for Mankiewicz. "Both airplanes and yachts offer similar surfaces and go through extreme climates so the technology coming from the aerospace industry works very well on yachts." Even though ALEXSEAL products were only launched five years ago, they are supported by decades of research and development.

Mankiewicz realized, however, that this experience alone would not lead to creating successful products and enlisted the services of industry experts. "When we decided to get into

BY KEN MASI



ALEXSEAL provides a full range of topside products developed from Mankiewicz's experience of more than 100 years in the coatings industry. The textured coatings it supplies for car dashboards are now finding their way onto boat helms.

this market we hired people with a lot of experience in yacht coatings so as we developed our product line we would be able to meet the industry needs," says Nelson. "Paints have changed over the years and we design our formulas around the latest advances in technology."

One company that Mankiewicz works closely with is German chemical company Bayer, which was originally responsible for developing polyurethane technology—the same technology used to produce

Mankiewicz's polyester-based polyurethane paints. "We have worked with Bayer to obtain the latest advances in resins, pigments and UV filters to produce a topcoat that is durable, will maintain its luster for a very long time, be scratch resistant, and stain resistant," says Nelson. One of the other major advances that Mankiewicz achieved due to Bayer's progress in resin technology was developing a polyester topcoat that can be repaired easily. The ALEXSEAL coatings are also formu-

lated to be what they call "higher solids" so they cover more area with less product.

Mankiewicz is a privately owned, mid-size company with 750 employees worldwide, including 100 chemists. Along with its headquarters in Hamburg, Germany, the company has a facility in St. Louis, Missouri, to serve customers in North America. These two laboratories develop the ALEXSEAL products, which along with primers, fairing compounds and topcoats include custom coatings for boatbuilders. "Our size and private ownership allows us to be very flexible, so as we develop our product line we are able to incorporate customer feedback into our new formulas," says Nelson. "We are also able to come to market very quickly to satisfy a customer's needs, whether that's for environmental reasons, or for application purposes [such as faster drying times], or custom colors."

In the same family ownership for more than 100 years, Mankiewicz has developed a team-oriented corporate culture where everyone in the company has access to everyone else. "We are committed to promoting a positive work environment based on team spirit where everyone works together and even the owner of the company is available at any time," says Nelson.

This team concept and easy-access attitude is passed along to boatbuilders and repair yards, and even the owners of boats finished with ALEXSEAL products. "We have representatives worldwide experienced in the marine market that are able to go to the customer's facility and provide on-site training on how to apply our products and to make certain our products fit into the needs of their

production environment," says Nelson. "We also have the ability to take any inquiry through our Web site and a tech service department available on call at our St. Louis facility.

also providing care and maintenance instructions to the boat owners and captains.

A company that relies heavily on innovation, Mankiewicz recently

Most importantly to Mankiewicz, however, is its effort to remain environmentally responsible. "We are always working towards providing products that are compliant to global



Producing paints able to withstand the extreme conditions of air travel paved the way for the development of the ALEXSEAL yacht coatings. The clean, modern architecture of Mankiewicz's current facility in Hamburg, Germany, and its high-tech warehouse space are a far cry from the industrial look of its original facility first in use more than 100 years ago.

We will often get the local representative involved because they may have better knowledge of what the customer is doing and of their production environment [temperatures, humidity, etc.]"

Providing technical support is one of the key elements to ALEXSEAL's program. That not only involves educating builders and repair yards during the application process, but

introduced North American builders to a new machine that mixes fairing compounds in larger, more precise quantities, greatly speeding up the fairing process. Mankiewicz will also soon introduce new primers to speed up the painting process and develop their yacht interior lines with waterborne coatings that create textured helm surfaces borne out of the automotive industry.

environmental requirements," says Nelson. "Whether it's the EPA or European Coalition, we are spending a lot of time looking at what future regulations will be to make sure we provide products to boatbuilders and yards that allow them to be in compliance with those regulations as well."

For more information on ALEXSEAL Yacht Coatings, visit alexseal.com.

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