

FAIRING & FINISHES

Photo: SYT, Tom van Oossanen



The Official Magazine of
ALEXSEAL Yacht Coatings

Volume XVI



Travel – Into the Great Wide Open with Modern Adventurers

Application – Behind the Scenes with Dutch Yacht Painters

Yacht Photography – Interview with Tom van Oossanen

Coatings Insights – Bringing Paint to Life

Anniversary – 20 Years of ALEXSEAL

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ALEXSEAL®
Yacht Coatings

Welcome to the World of ALEXSEAL®

The ALEXSEAL team never backs down from a challenge. For almost 130 years, Mankiewicz Gebr. & Co. has led the development of advanced coatings products. The chemists and technicians who are responsible for ALEXSEAL Yacht Coatings, continually develop improvements throughout the entire coatings system, from fairing to finish. ALEXSEAL utilizes advanced raw materials and solutions derived from the aerospace, rail and industrial equipment industries — where solving similar challenges is often mission critical.

Enjoy reading and cast off.
Your ALEXSEAL team

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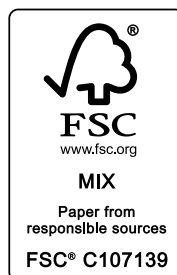
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Heading for the Vendée Globe

Just a few months to go and the world will once again be able to look forward to a bunch of adventurers who, all alone with their high-tech IMOCAS, will set off on a race around the globe to confront the elemental forces of the seas.



© PuraVida Images

It is one of the most exciting sailing races in the world and one of the last great adventures in our highly technology-driven world – the Vendée Globe. Its course takes it around the globe, across the great oceans, and through some of the world's most dangerous nautical passages.

During the last challenge in 2020/2021, we at ALEXSEAL were very proud that our paints were allowed to go on the incredible journey on eight IMOCAS, and we were delighted to see the boats in first and second place shining in our paint when they crossed the finish line.

This year, we will again be racing on many hulls. We are already looking forward to two in particular. Phil Sharp is on the list of candidates with his OCEANSLAB, as is Boris Herrmann with the MALIZIA – SEAEXPLORER.

The OCEANSLAB will be a sustainable premiere at this year's edition. It will be the first IMOCA ever to operate without fossil fuels on board. Instead, a new hydrogen-electric system will be used, including a hydrogen fuel cell, green hydrogen and hydrogen generators, a solar PV system, and lithium-ion batteries.

We wish all starters an exciting race and good winds.



The last time there was a dramatic finish. This time he is back at the start: Boris Herrmann with the MALIZIA – SEAEXPLORER.
© Marin LE ROUX – polaRYSE

Behind the Scenes of the Finishing Experts

Everyone knows the look of a perfectly painted superyacht. The achievement of this visually stunning result is done behind closed doors. Together with Bonsink Yacht Painters we take a detailed look behind the curtain – a spotlight on the true craftsmanship of yacht painting.



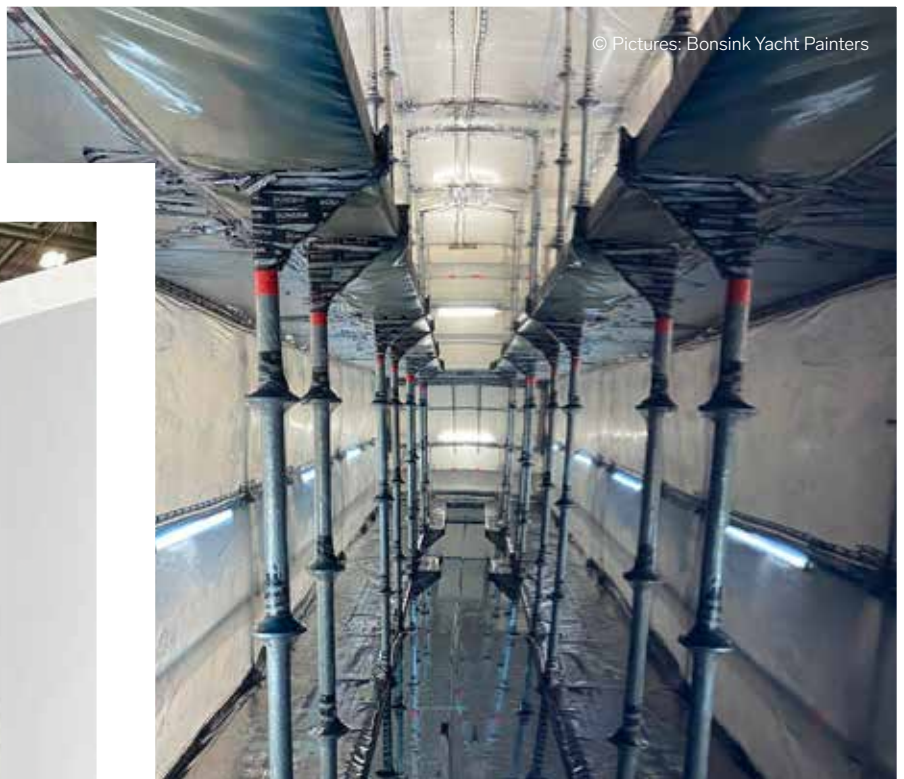
The main focus of Bonsink's coating jobs is anchored in the Dutch superyacht market with a strong professional customer base operating in smaller-size yachts. Holland is well-known for building the highest quality superyachts in the world, so logically, the majority of their projects are new builds. Since the last few years, the number of bigger refits has been growing in The Netherlands. Due to their success in new builds, they are growing on the refit side of the business as well at roughly 80:20.

The Technical Set-up

On each shipyard Bonsink works, they bring in their own needed infrastructure. "Heated storage containers for non-paint and paint materials will be installed. All required material like lighting, compressed air distribution, extraction equipment, and filler mixing machines will be installed at the project facility," summarizes Jeroen de Vries, Operations Manager at Bonsink.

"At our headquarters in Vollenhove, we have a full technical service department that, during our projects, carries out maintenance on our (spray) equipment for the full duration of the project. Our team receives a full serviced set of spray equipment for each next paint application. This secures us from failures during our work and holds us to the high quality levels." Demountable parts of the yachts that require full system application can be transported to the facilities in Vollenhove and Zwartsluis to be finished. This reduces the necessary amount of space inside the shipyard and saves the traveling of smaller teams working on these components.





© Pictures: Bonsink Yacht Painters

Paint Process of a Yacht Refit

"Each individual refit requires a different approach. Sometimes, a refit comes in for simple primer and topcoat, but many Dutch refits are coming in for a more complex job. This varies from paint jobs scheduled to improve general quality, for example, by 'skim-fairing', explains Jeroen, while "others are coming in for complete extensions of the hull and the above aft decks."

During the painting process, yachts are divided into 'blocks' by the Bonsink team, where different activities take place at the same time. A shipyard project manager plans this in close contact with our team so that we do not need to cross each other's working areas.

"These blocks allow us to manage the curing times of the applied product before going to the next step of preparation," describes Jeroen the paint job organization. "From the sideline, you can see our tents moving around the yacht several times during a refit."

Corroded areas will go back to the bare substrate and receive a complete system.

In the same period, the team treats other bare areas that need treatment because of modification or hot work activities. "After this phase, as filler is used, we leave these areas to cure. This phase is important to minimize 'printing through' of these local repairs later in-service," the application expert continues. "After this process, we move towards bigger areas to be followed up by the various primers, showcoats, and topcoats. Also, here, proper curing periods are mandatory."



Refit Job versus Coating a New Build

A new build painting process is completely different compared to a refit situation. The most significant difference between a new build and a refit is the involved fairing process. After the blasting and priming of the full substrate are done, fairing work starts. Jeroen emphasizes: "This is one of the most important steps that has a lot of influence on the end result. Here, an applicator's work and craftsmanship can make a difference. You probably can imagine that fairing yachts 'straight and fair' over lines, that can easily exceed 50-60 meters, with a tolerance of less than 500 microns is challenging."

High-end products are mandatory to achieve the agreed acceptable criteria. "As applicators, we build our processes around quality and stable product we can rely on. In addition, superb performance of topcoats saves us all from disappointment after delivery," highlights Jeroen regarding the importance of the coating products.

Bonsink uses ALEXSEAL products for every layer: Protective Primer 161, Fairing Compound 202, Fine Filler 303, Super Build 302, Finish Primer 442, and Premium Topcoat 501. "The quality stability is making the ALEXSEAL system very reliable in terms of application and predictable in-service performance. Sufficient material stock in the market makes it comfortable to work with. Also, the Dutch market has very experienced and professional onsite support with the local ALEXSEAL team – and that is another area where they differentiate themselves from their competitors."



"Modern yachts are nowadays more often designed in metallic color shades – and they look stunning."

Jeroen de Vries, Operations Manager at Bonsink Yacht Painters



BONSINK

Yacht Painters b.v.

More than just Yacht Painters

Behind the name 'Bonsink Yacht Painters' is a team of yacht experts working as service providers at major shipyards for over 40 years. They have their own marina where vessels up to 20 meters can be refitted. Bonsink sees itself as a yacht service company that runs the full scope of technical services from engines to carpentry to electrical engineering. In addition, the group also owns the woodworking company called Bonsink Jachtbetimmering, which builds several big components for super-yacht shipyards in Holland.

Experts Right from the Start

Derk Bonsink started in 1982 painting small yachts in the area of Zwartsluis. The craftsmanship of handling a brush and roll moved him toward high-end customers, and the yacht projects became bigger and bigger. In more than 40 years, he grew his business to a market share of approximately 70% of Holland's superyacht new build application projects. Bonsink, represented by Derk and his son Daniel, is still a family-run company today.



© Bonsink Yacht Painters



© Bonsink Yacht Painters



© Bonsink Yacht Painters



© Tom van Oossanen



Perfectly Staged

Building a superyacht is a fine art. And so is staging these masterpieces of yacht building.

The man behind this and many other yacht shots gives us an in-depth look at the life of a true yacht photographer. Read the full interview on the next pages. →

Passion for Perfection

In January 2024, we had the rare opportunity to speak to a man who has probably set foot on more luxury yachts than any multimillionaire.



"My passion for machines is what drives me to look for that unique picture that no one else will take."

Tom van Oossanen

As a yacht photographer, Tom van Oossanen has had the privilege of photographing the largest yachts of our time in the most beautiful places on earth. In this interview, he tells us how he made it from a small Dutch harbor town to the seven seas, what drives him and what he considers to be the perfect shot. And of course all the pictures in this article were taken by Tom himself.

Starting the Fire

In your bio on your website you admit: When you saw the 'Boadicea' from Amels off the coast of your hometown of Den Helder, your passion and interest in super-yachts was awakened. When exactly did you see the 'Boadicea', and what precisely about a superyacht fascinates you?

Growing up in Den Helder, a Navy, Fishing, and Offshore town, I was quite familiar with ships. Especially when they were grey (Navy) or all colors of the rainbow, they were usually a bit rusty! (Fishing).

So when my brothers and I went on our weekly stroll over the harbor in 1999 (when I was nine) and saw 'Boadicea' moored in port, we couldn't believe what we saw. Shiny, white, and absolutely huge. Since then, my fascination for boats has only become more prominent.

You gained your first photographic experience at 12, taking pictures of the harbor and airport of Den Helder. Are you a self-taught photographer, or did you go through a tough training or study program to bring your skills to this enormous level?

I was hooked when I took my dad's old camera on a school camp to the Zuiderzee Museum in Enkhuizen. The idea of freezing a moment in time and being able to rewatch it for eternity grabbed me. This was just on the edge of digital cameras becoming more mainstream. So I had my first experience with film!

From then on, I saved up for my first digital camera and completely did it myself, hence why it took 15 years to make 1 penny with photography, maybe! But in hindsight, I would not have done it any other way. It is just a matter of doing it every day. Even with limited equipment, you can achieve so much. It helps to have a great camera, but it really needs your eye. And you can only develop it by doing it every day.

About the Projects

You have photographed some of the most impressive yachts in the world in recent years. How exactly do you get the jobs? Do the shipyards approach you to document their projects, or do the owners contact you directly? Do you proactively approach ships that interest you?

I am located in a good position in the Netherlands with close proximity to Germany to work with the most amazing superyacht builders in the world. So yes, many jobs come from the actual builders, but with the rise of social media, like Instagram, I have noticed I get more and more jobs from owners directly. It is just easier to get in touch, and it is a perfect example of showing your work to the world.

What has been the most beautiful yacht you have photographed so far?

It's always a tough question, as they are all so different! But I think the 'Black Pearl' shoot remains one of my favorites. She is such an impressive ship. But ships like 'Savannah', 'Nord', and 'Liva' are also superb vessels.

You also have other vehicles such as airplanes and rockets in front of your camera lens. What is your absolute dream project that you would like to photograph sometime in your life?

Yes, unfortunately, there are not enough rockets yet! It is my absolute dream to work more in the spaceflight industry, but just like yachting, it is very hard to get in the game. But I keep pushing.

Projects that would be amazing to capture are, of course, SpaceX's Starship, which I have been following closely for many years. But working with the ESA would also be amazing – Or Blue Origin's New Glenn system; there are so many projects I'd love to be involved with. And it is going to happen: persistence!





On the Job

How many cameras and lenses does a superyacht photographer have with him on the job? And do you use additional equipment?

I usually bring two cameras with three or four lenses. Plus, nowadays, a small compact Leica, the perfect little camera, and, of course, a drone as standard additional equipment. Sometimes, a helicopter when the shoot needs it, and the budget allows it. A stable tender is always required. And I always start the day with a banana, which gets me through the day!

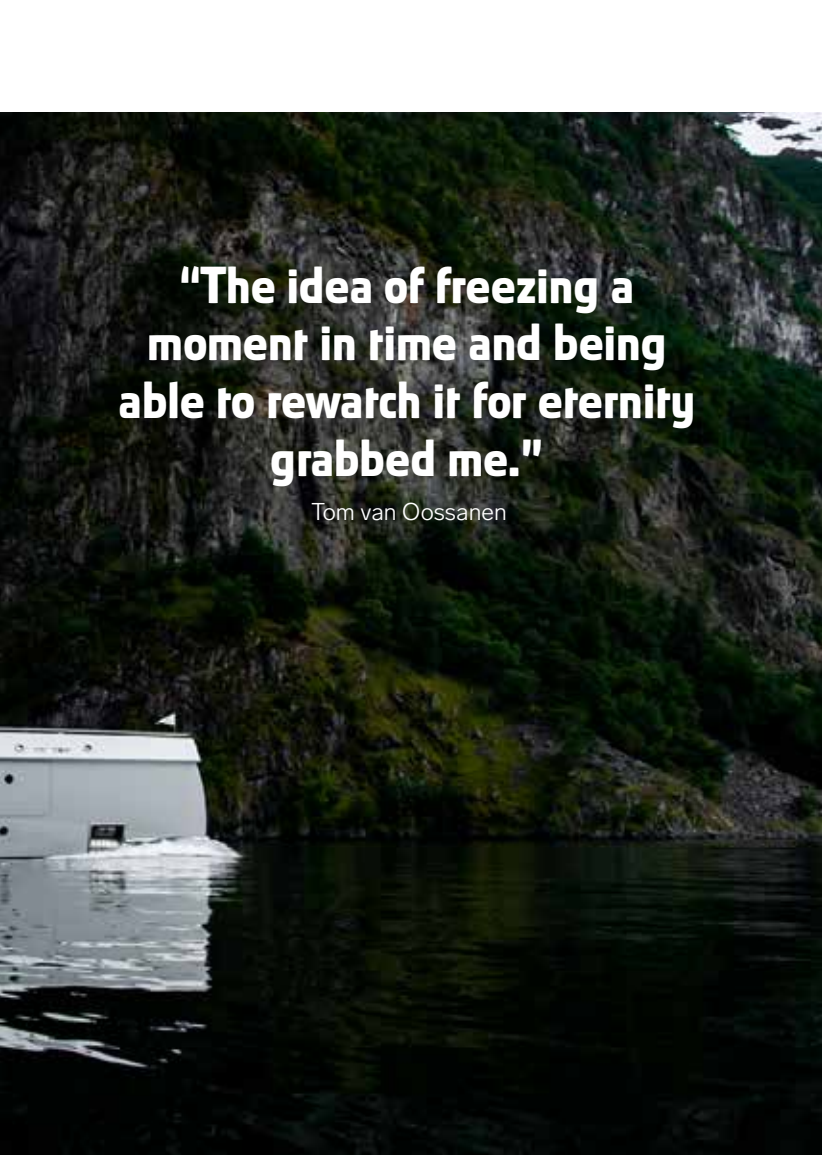
Always working at the most beautiful parts of the seven seas – What is the biggest fear or most significant danger you have with you on a shoot?

Hmm, I never have been scared or in a dangerous situation. Of course, the heli goes low every now and then, but all these pilots are such professionals; I trust them, literally, with my life.

Even if you do not risk your life every shooting day. Are there any unusual or exciting things that has happened to you on a yacht shoot?

I get most excited about the light, especially at the end of the day in the Norwegian fjords. It is a really magical time when the light is good, the boat is in a perfect position, and it looks nice and clean. That gets me excited, really! I hope one day to do a cool shoot in Antarctica or Greenland and capture some whales while doing a shoot.





"The idea of freezing a moment in time and being able to rewatch it for eternity grabbed me."

Tom van Oossanen

Constantly evolving

Your pictures have a very significant and recognizable style. How did you find your photographic style and how would you describe your visual language?

It is constantly evolving, like stuff I was super happy with five years ago, or three, or even one, is really different from my standard today. And I believe that's how you get better, by trying new things. You will definitely see it change over time. But I know my photos are sometimes a bit rough on the edges, as I pretty much use my camera as a pencil on a canvas.

How many superyachts have you photographed in your life?

I think there is a difference between a quick spot or an actual shoot! But let's say around 250.

What do you consider to be the perfect setting for a yacht shoot?

A fjord, low light. Beautiful boat. All set up. Maybe a canoe with it, a nice heli on deck and definitely a sub on the surface. Shape and surface are of course the most tangible things when you look at a yacht. But a good photo conveys more than that.

What are the elements that make a good photo of you?

Basically, light is everything. It makes a photo 10 times better. For example, the same picture with different light can really make the difference. The way a reflection bounces off some beautiful paintwork makes everything better.

As a paint manufacturer, we naturally have an extreme focus on the surface when we look at a yacht. Both in terms of appearance and the durability and functionality of the surface. What do you look for when you see the painted yacht surface?

Yes, definitely reflections! It is the way to make or break a photo. I know it is hard work for the crew, especially after a long voyage or a rough cruise. But then that hull is nice and clean, and the paint is put on in the best way possible. It is a true treat to do a shoot!

Dear Tom, thank you very much for these interesting insights into your exclusive world of yacht photography.



Milestones of Our Journey

2024, we celebrate 20 years of ALEXSEAL Yacht Coatings. It is an excellent time to take a look back at our mission, the first steps, and what lies ahead.

"It's about time." Under this slogan, we started at Mankiewicz in March 2004 as an global paint manufacturer to help shape the market for high-end yacht coatings. In the more than 125-year history of Mankiewicz, a few products already have been used in boatbuilding over the decades. At the beginning of the 2000s, there was a comprehensive vision: a complete portfolio under the name 'ALEXSEAL Yacht Coatings' was to be launched. Applicable from the first primer coat to the final topcoat. Thomas Schultz, Global Sales Director at ALEXSEAL, has been on board from the beginning and looks back on the course already taken. And what lies ahead in the coming years.





“Developing and applying yacht paints is considered one of the fine arts in the coatings industry. There are an incredible number of industries where the highest demands are placed on the finish; however, the surfaces to be painted are rarely as large and demanding as on a superyacht,” says Thomas. “In car and aircraft painting, a comparably good finish is essential, although the design of a car or aircraft is much more forgiving in terms of the visual appearance of the finished surface.”

Engineering in a Can

This is because many vehicles only very rarely have large, completely flat surfaces. For example, the fuselage of an airplane is enormous and is painted by several painters at the same time. But it is still round, and the passengers ‘only’ expect an extremely high-gloss, not a mirror-like surface. “Especially on large yachts, we have comparably huge but almost flat surfaces on the hull. This is an extreme challenge, even for professional painters. If the performance of the topcoat is not at 100%, you cannot achieve a mirror-like surface appearance. Suppose the underlying primer or fairing compound layers are not 100% perfect. In that case, you can also see this immediately through the topcoat,” says Thomas, summarizing only one of the challenges for yacht paints and the paint crews.

Anyone who has ever painted a high-gloss yacht can confirm this and know that it is important to match and coordinate products for each layer to achieve a perfect surface finish. To develop and produce yacht coatings at the highest level, you must know how to do your homework right from the beginning. Suppose you look at all five layers of a yacht coating. In that case, you come up with a vast bundle of functional and optical properties that must be fulfilled: DOI and UV resistance are just the tip of the requirements iceberg, extending deep into adhesion, sandability and polishability. “Painting conditions vary significantly worldwide and also play a crucial role. Almost everything is possible, from construction site environments to clean rooms and from cold, dry environments to warm, humid ones. The coating portfolio must be able to map all of this with suitable systems.”

Challenges: Sought, found, solved

“At the beginning, it was a very complex and exciting challenge to enter this market and put together a suitable portfolio,” recalls the yacht expert. “But what made life much easier for us was the wealth of experience that we, as the ALEXSEAL team at the company Mankiewicz, could draw on. There have been some synergies in terms of development, and we have gained experience with high-gloss and robust surfaces over time since our foundation in 1895 as a paint manufacturer.”

Mankiewicz's markets and product lines show clear parallels. The global coating manufacturer is firmly anchored in the aviation industry, which has taken the exterior painting of aircraft to a new level with innovative coating systems. The rail sector is also concerned with large exterior surfaces with visually and functionally highly sophisticated finishes.

“Of course, this was and still is worth its weight in gold for developing our yacht portfolio. Right from the start, we had an experienced team and colleagues who could quickly adapt to the yacht industry on the laboratory side, in application technology and production,” says Thomas.

Markets ahead

With such a background, it was easier for the young ALEXSEAL team to get a foot in the door with shipyards and yacht painters. “Nevertheless, despite the many advantages, it was difficult to win the first major projects at the beginning,” explains the ALEXSEAL pioneer. “Confidence in our set-up is one thing, but experience with the right paint job in the dock is another. We first had to earn our spurs.”

In 2004, ALEXSEAL was brought to market first in Australia and the United States. After yacht painters and shipyards had noticed the first results, the first inquiries came from Europe, especially the Netherlands, in the second year. And in America, demand continued to grow steadily. Already in 2006 and 2007, many yachts were applying ALEXSEAL's Polyurethane Premium Topcoat 501, including the largest dark blue private yacht in the world at that time.

The story and the level of awareness naturally continued to develop over the following years. More and more projects came along, and they got bigger and bigger. So big and prominent that most of them can no longer be named. In 2023, almost 40 percent of the world's 100 largest yachts were coated with ALEXSEAL systems. For more than one decade, ALEXSEAL has been a solid and still strong growing player in the yacht coatings market.





Sailing On The Seven Seas

Projects are painted worldwide nowadays. While the focus in Europe is primarily on the construction and refit of superyachts, there are sportfish yachts in the USA and a strong DIY community with smaller boats. In Asia increasingly high-quality and larger new builds have emerged in recent years. The larger the paint jobs, the more critical it is for yacht painters to receive close and personal support from the paint manufacturer. Trust in partnership and specialist knowledge is integral to a perfect finish.

"To do justice to this, a global network of experts is essential for a paint manufacturer," says Thomas, looking at ALEXSEAL's setup. "With our global distributor network, we are always quickly on-site for our customers. This ensures fast and reliable technical support." Also the Mankiewicz locations in Charleston, SC (USA), Hamburg (Germany), Gyancourt (France), Leicester (UK), Singapore, and Shanghai (China) are vital support hotspots.

However, ALEXSEAL is interested in close cooperation and in personal relationships. "One of our highest standards is that we work with the same experts in the local markets for many years. The closer the relationship and the trust on both sides, the more effective and targeted the advice and joint project support. And you can see that in the final surface result," says Thomas about the ALEXSEAL philosophy.

New Horizons

If you ask Thomas where the journey in coatings for yachts is heading, you get a clear answer. "When we started twenty years ago, a classic PU topcoat like our Premium Topcoat 501 was the established system. Then, we introduced a new approach to the market with our BaseCoat / ClearCoat system. That is a system with which Mankiewicz has already revolutionized the aviation industry."

It offers outstanding values for a wide range of painting parameters but should be applied by experienced painting crews to achieve the best possible result. "The final, additional layer in particular – the clearcoat – gives the finish particularly high durability, UV resistance, and visual depth. This is the direction we consider significant for the coming years."

However, the yacht market is not just a sea of superyachts. The sport and leisure segment and medium-sized luxury yachts also make up a large part of the market. "Today, we are very proud that we have the right answer for different requests and painting conditions with our Premium Topcoat 501, Acrylic Topcoat X, and High Solid BaseCoat/ClearCoat system. And we look forward to every new challenge that makes our portfolio even broader, more durable, and richer in effect and color. A big thank you to everyone who has challenged, accompanied, and trusted us over the last 20 years."

Here's to the next 20 years, and always a shiny, perfect finish on the keel.



Coating Solutions for All Elements

Our brand ALEXSEAL is part of the global Mankiewicz Group. Perfect surfaces have taken center stage there since 1895.

Mankiewicz has been producing and developing high-tech industrial coatings for almost 130 years. It all started with high-gloss carriage coatings. Today, this has developed into a broad portfolio for various markets. No matter where you are: Sea, air or land.

On land, Mankiewicz is on the move with agricultural and construction machinery as well as in the automotive industry. Naturally, there are also areas such as electromobility and the challenges of modern sensor technology.

Coatings for wind turbine rotor blades and the protection of train exteriors and cars are two areas where Mankiewicz supplies sustainable, environmentally friendly industries with functional coatings.

The Mankiewicz Group also knows its way around the sky. Back in 1969, their paint flew to the moon, and today, they are one of the few paint suppliers that make civil aviation more beautiful.



↑ Rain erosion protection & durability



↑ High-protective surfaces



↑ Mechanical resistance & longevity



Other specialist markets include medical equipment, appliances, mechanical engineering, and many more. Even if these are very diverse and different, they all have one requirement in common: a visually appealing, functional, and protective surface should always be the end result.

These similarities mean that there is a high level of innovative expertise in the laboratories, production, and application technology departments at Mankiewicz. The differences in the markets always allow us to look beyond the boundaries of the respective industries and are, therefore, the basis for perfect synergies. This is a key advantage for ALEXSEAL being a part of this expert coating family.



↑ High-Gloss & UV-stability



↑ Chemical resistance & functionality



For the Very First Time

It is a magic moment, when a vessel is going to hit the water for the first time. It is a milestone of building a yacht – not only for the owner but for everyone involved.



The various stages of construction at the shipyard are impressive.

The work on the vessel itself, the handling of the hull on the shipyard premises, and the launch into the water are great motifs worth showing.

These expertly handled process steps testify to the engineering skills and excellent craftsmanship required to build such impressive yachts.

A big shout-out to all the people who build the yachts in the shipyards every day with so much passion. They are making it possible for the yachts and their perfect finishes to be later photographed in front of fantastic backdrops.



**"It was a great idea for us to
get out and see the world while we're
still young and able."**

Matt & Jessica



Into the Great Wide Open

Incredible destinations, unexpected challenges. Leaving the shores behind is the adventure of a lifetime. We spoke with Matt & Jessica making this dream come true since more than a decade.

Leaving the American Dream

Until 2012, Matt and Jessica lived an everyday American life in Grand Rapids near the Great Lakes in Michigan. She worked in the billing department for a home and auto insurance company. He was a sales manager for a local car dealer. To recover from the stress of everyday life, they went out on the Lake Michigan almost every weekend in their own boat (a Hunter 240).

Both were in their late twenties at the time. For many, this is a time in life when you slowly start to settle down. Matt began to read a lot about sailing and found many reports about people who had decided to travel the world on their sailboats. "That was something we had never heard of before. We knew our Hunter 240 would not be able to manage such a journey, but it did begin the spark of 'Maybe this is something we could do too.' Neither of us was cemented in a career that we couldn't walk away from, and we thought it would be a great way to see the world while still having our own space to live in," say Matt and Jessica, looking back.





Tip from the world travelers

"The best spot in the world to go for a swim is Faja Orvidour on the island of São Jorge in the Azores, and then grab a beer after at maré viva while enjoying the views at Poça da Fajã das Almas", say Jessica and Matt.



And then they set sail. The two of them switched their Hunter for a 1989 Sabre 34 Targa. Shortly before starting her own world exploration, her parents had moved from Michigan to Vietnam and were visiting new worlds. Jessica inherited their adventurous DNA.

Since their first departure 12 years ago, the two have traveled 35,000 nautical miles, explored 27 countries, sailed the Arctic Sea, and crossed the Atlantic several times. Over the years, the Sabre 34 Targa has become a Trisalu 37. The two have collected countless memories and found numerous favorite places: "There are a lot of beautiful and relaxing places we've visited in the Caribbean, but the most captivating places we've been are Sao Miguel, Azores (Portugal), Madeira (Portugal) and Lovund in Norway." Jessica summarized her personal highlights.

But it's not always just a romantic adventure either. The forces of nature are a constant companion in such a venture. Sometimes, 1,000 miles from the nearest coast, there is an unintended encounter with a 620-foot container ship, which passes by at a distance of 150 feet during a strong storm.



Work in progress — Supported by ALEXSEAL

"Until we can work on the exterior of our boat this fall or next year, for right now we'll be using the Super Build 302 and the Fine Filler 303. We're using them because they are easy to spray with high build qualities, and easy to sand as well. Plus the great quality of the ALEXSEAL brand!" tell Matt and Jessica about their fairing and finishing mission.



To navigate the world's oceans even more safely and quickly in the future, Matt and Jessica have launched an exciting new project. The goal is to add even more favorite places to their top destinations. To do this, they are changing their sailing boat to a catamaran, which they are building from scratch to suit their individual needs.

"We wanted something that had great sailing performance and would sail well in light winds. It is 13.6m long and 7.3m wide. It is a very light vessel that should be able to sail at 90% wind speed and will allow us to travel much longer distances in a shorter time. We're also going electric hybrid, so the port hull will have a diesel and electric engine, while the starboard hull will only be electric," the two proudly explain.

As soon as the catamaran is finished and given a new surface finish with ALEXSEAL, it will return to sea. And the course is already roughly set: "We'll stay on the East Coast of the US and in the Eastern Caribbean for probably the first year while we get familiar with the boat and how she sails vs our previous monohulls and how she performs in all types of weather. We'll make our fourth Atlantic crossing the following season and take her into the Mediterranean."



Bringing Paint to Life

The journey of every yacht coating starts in the laboratory and passes a high-tech production line. Jens Büning from the ALEXSEAL Yacht Coatings lab team gives us a tour behind the scenes of how and why to develop new yacht coatings.

Before we look at how a new coating is developed, let's first look at why we develop new coatings at ALEXSEAL. There are generally two different motivations for this, says Jens Büning, Laboratory Manager at the ALEXSEAL site at Mankiewicz in Hamburg: "On the one hand, we start formulating a new coating to expand our existing portfolio, for example, by adding a technology that we haven't used before. For example, this was the case with our Acrylic Topcoat X," explains Jens.



"There were already acrylic coating systems on the yacht market, but we wanted to develop a game-changing acrylic in the entire industry. However, a second, even more exciting starting point comes from the market. If, for example, a new challenge arises for which there is not yet a paint solution, then our spirit of research is particularly challenged."

Examples would be new requirements for the paint surface in terms of resistance or functionalities or new constructive materials to which a paint must adhere.

The Wish List

Once the new challenge has been identified, the first step is not to formulate a new coating recipe but to create a wish list for the coating, specifying everything it should ideally be able to do.

However, the laboratory team does not do this alone; it involves ALEXSEAL's global sales team. They actively talk to customers in the market who could make good use of the new coating. This ensures two important aspects:

First, you can be sure that the properties of the coating are being developed with the customer in mind. Second, the global presence of the ALEXSEAL team ensures that the customer's local requirements (such as climatic conditions) are reflected on the wish list.



Around the world, ALEXSEAL can rely on several internal application testing centers like this one in Hamburg, Germany. They are frequently used in cooperation with the customers to train, exchange, and boost coating knowledge for both sides.

"There were already acrylic coating systems on the yacht market, but we wanted to develop a game-changing acrylic in the entire industry."

Jens Büning

Realizing Wishes

The laboratory team begins to formulate the coating only when the wish list has been finalized. The first question we ask ourselves is whether there is already a similar coating system that might be a considerable advantage in a completely different market because we can draw on the experience of numerous other industries," says Jens, looking at the Mankiewicz portfolio. There are valuable synergies here, especially in the rail and aviation industries.

No matter what kind of yacht paint is being developed, there are always essential functionalities that are an absolute must-have.

- Excellent UV stability is necessary to maintain the color and gloss level over the long term, as the sun's power has a powerful effect on water.
- A good flow of the paint on the surface is also crucial. The paint must be laid very smoothly on the surface to look like a reflective surface later. This is an exciting chemical and physical challenge on vertical hull sides.
- In addition, the drying properties and overspray uptake must be harmonized. On the one hand, users naturally want the paint to dry quickly to prevent dust inclusions. On the other

hand, the paint needs a sufficiently long open time to absorb the overspray well during painting. This is particularly important for large surfaces and when using several painters.

- And as far as usability is concerned, a shelf life of several years is always aimed for.

Then, we add the properties on the wish list for the specific coating to be developed. During the formulation process, particular attention is paid to selecting suitable resins, as these have a significant impact on the core properties of the coating. Additives can then be used to fine-tune the paint concerning the smallest nuances.

Black and White View

Black and white are the colors that we develop first for a new paint job. "One reason for this is that white yachts make up a large part of the market. And on the other hand, black and white are also excellent colors for carrying out initial performance tests with the new paint," says Jens, explaining the next development step.

After all, testing paints is an essential step to market launch. ALEXSEAL tests under three aspects.

- Firstly, several specialized application technology departments worldwide can simulate various painting scenarios using original industry equipment in climate-controlled spray booths.
- Secondly, ALEXSEAL has many customers worldwide who are happy to be involved in practical tests. "We are naturally very pleased that this 'moving forward together' mentality exists in the market. In the beginning, despite all the chemistry and expertise, the trial and error principle sometimes helps to speed up the way to the perfect solution."
- The third component is the in-house testing center. Various test situations, such as ropes rubbing on the hull, can be simulated there. Weather resistance, UV stability, and saltwater resistance are, of course, also examined.

The laboratory can produce the material for these tests in small quantities, equipped like a small production line.

Once all the tests and initial trial coatings on the market have been completed, the paint goes into classic production, and the laboratory starts working on a wide range of colors for the new paint system.

"If you start from scratch with paint, this process takes one to two years. However, if I have a similar paint that I can build on, then it goes much faster," says Jens, referring to the time it takes to bring a paint to life. So, a perfect finish always has the same recipe: expertise, experience, and a small pinch of patience and joy of experimentation.



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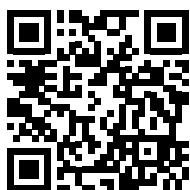


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