

New strategy for Turkish shipyard

A change is undergoing at Turquoise Yachts and the company has experienced a revival and an alteration in course in many of their ways over the past year. No one knows this better than the man who has been a part of it from the beginning, Mehmet Karabeyoglu.



Mehmet Karabeyoglu (l) and Dr. Mohammed Al Barwani (r)

Gemma Fottles, interview by Merijn de Waard

Following the investment the company has seen by Dr. Mohammed Al Barwani in 2014, the most apparent change has to be the company's revised name. "We wanted people to understand that a real change has taken place," says Mehmet, partner at Turquoise Yachts. "We dropped the name Proteksan and kept Turquoise, which we feel is a softer name and also easier to remember." He further explains that the recent change hasn't really affected the way the company is managed. "Apart from the new board members, from the family and from Al Barwani's investment company, the day-to-day running of the company is identical. I consult directly with Mr. Al Barwani and he often visits the shipyard, every 6 weeks or so. Otherwise the company is running exactly the same as before."

The newfound investment is also allowing the yard to expand its facilities, a growth that seems to have been in the pipeline from the very beginning. "We're also expanding our big shed, which was 85 metres long by 40 metres wide, and is now being doubled. We already had the foundations put in place when we originally built the facility, and now we're just extending the shed to become 160 metres long." Naturally, one can assume that the idea behind the expansion comes with the plan of building larger yachts. Mehmet however explains that they have no real desire to enter a market larger than the one that they are already catering for. "In principal we want to build below 85 metres, as we refer clients to Oceanco who are looking to build larger than 85 metres. Therefore our preferred range is between 70-80 metre yachts." The larger shed then would instead be

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used to maximise their output of yachts within this range. "At the moment we have the 77 metres project under construction, so we will be able to put three other boats of a similar size in there."

Like many other shipyards, Turquoise Yachts is going to build yachts on speculation. Their outlook on this method of business is rather unique and seems to be paying off. "My partner's idea is that he builds boats as if they were his own. Which is good because the moment the yacht is in water it will be used by him, if it's not sold beforehand."

Their flexibility in this sense means a regular turnover of newly launched yachts, which attracts new designers and clients alike. And even though Turquoise has brought the speculation-build concept home, they understand the security and value that acquiring new build projects from direct clients hold. "We're working on one large sail boat project and also a 60 metre plus and possibly also a new 70 metre motor yacht as well. When these projects happen we may change the philosophy and build less on speculation, but there

will always be one or two yachts for my partner's use."

In addition to the shipyard facilities, time is also being spent in adjusting the Turquoise image and the familiarity of the brand. Once a rare sight at major boat shows, the yard will now feature more regularly at these all-important events. "In the past we never used to exhibit at boat shows, other than if we had boats in the area and used them for display. But we've changed that philosophy now and we're going to have a stand both in Monaco and Fort Lauderdale, and most probably in Dubai as well. We're thinking of Singapore but we're not sure yet."

It does seem however Dr. Al Barwani's involvement in the yard will also have an influence on production and more specifically the source of certain products installed onboard the yachts. "We have intentions of using more Dutch products, because of Dr. Al Barwani's involvement in Holland with Oceanco. Especially now with the strength of the Dollar it's also economical to use European products."

TURQUOISE YACHTS vs OCEANCO

Much speculation and rumour has surrounded the relationship that is shared by Turquoise Yachts and Oceanco, having Dr. Al Barwani as a mutual majority shareholder. Mehmet however comments that the two yards simply enjoy focussing on their respective ends of the market, and strictly have Al Barwani as a shareholder in common. "They're two separate shipyards with different philosophies as they cater to unique type of clients and each a totally different segment of the market.

We supplement each other because we build below 85 metres and Oceanco builds above 85 metres. All together it is a completely different clientele. But obviously Mr. Al Barwani is involved with both."

When questioned about his involvement with Oceanco and Turquoise Yachts at a recent press event, Dr. Al Barwani said: "Well, I was always interested in having two or three different shipyards.

The reason for that is to have a portfolio. Think of it like Volkswagen for instance. They own Bentley, they own Bugatti, and they own Volkswagen. Thereby you can give a client different product ranges. But at the same time the companies are very different, there are no common elements between Oceanco and Turquoise. What I wanted to do is to offer the market different products."