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'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder', as the saying goes, and this mantra can easily be applied to superyacht finishing. Therefore, measuring the quality of paint has continued to be contentious. However, the introduction of paint standards aimed to take away subjectivity and produce measurable data. In light of the recent launch of the Pinmar Standard 2.0, what is the role of paint standards and how important the model is for the industry?

Producing measurable data

Paint is arguably the most subjective feature on any superyacht and interpretations of what constitutes a quality paint job can vary significantly. As a result, paint and paint application continue to be notoriously litigious topics in the new-build and refit businesses, creating unnecessary headaches for clients, shipyards, paint manufacturers and applicators. However, the idea behind paint standards is to give parameters within which a paint job can be measured; in theory, with an agreed performance target set out at the beginning of any project, there should be no disagreements as to whether a paint job should be accepted or rejected.

In an ideal world, such standards would be unbiased and objective. However, considering the parties involved in setting out a standard, some might question whether it is possible for such measurements to be completely void of subjectivity. "Final acceptance of a cosmetic paint finish has long been a subject of debate," explains Gareth Thomas, technical support team manager at AkzoNobel. "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and often, for superyacht finishes, this is precisely the case. This makes it incredibly difficult for shipyards, applicators and coatings manufacturers to aim for a non-existent target. This is where defining a 'standard' helps. This doesn't just mean defining numbers to say 'yes' or 'no', but also defining how we are actually going to measure it."

Due to the many variables involved, every paint project is different and historically this has led to much subjectivity in the sector. Andy Williams, co-founder of CeraShield, agrees that paint standards help to minimise that subjectivity and are, therefore, an important part of the market. "If there is a set of standards and a reference area agreed at the beginning of a project, it allows the paint job to move forward and have the best chance of achieving the desired result," he says. "Paint companies realise that the owners' reps and captains are under a significant amount of pressure when it comes to signing off on a paint job, so set standards help to take the onus off of

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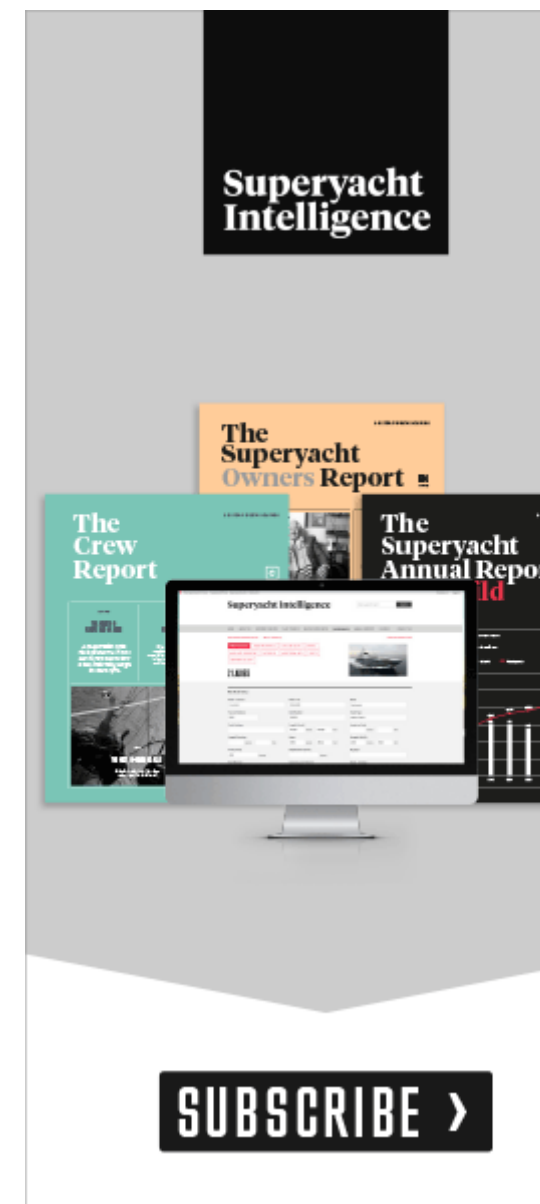
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them to make the decision as to whether it is an acceptable paint job or not.”

The possibility that paint standards can be objective if all decision-makers involved in a project agree from the start on parameters and values is repeated by Alexander Swain, project development manager – yachting concept, at Jotun. “It is important to have alignment and agreement with all parties and stakeholders before, during and at the end of the paint application project,” he clarifies. “This develops a more professional approach and raises the bar for all involved, moving the superyacht industry closer to professional marine practice.”

"Most industry ‘standards’ act more as guidelines for what is expected. They do



not, as a rule, draw a line in the sand and say everything above the line is fine and everything below it is unacceptable."

According to these key stakeholders, therefore, standards can be successful in applying an objective quality to such a subjective area as long as measurements are taken at the beginning of a project and agreed upon. However, Kay-Johannes Wrede of Wrede Consulting says that while the results may be objective, their assessment never is and nor should it be. "There is a difference between high and low visibility areas," he explains. "There is a difference whether a defect is located slap in the middle of the owner's preferred spot for entertaining or near the teak deck in a passageway. So when the results say 'fail' in both cases, the decision taken may still be different."

Wrede's stance is that across-the-board standards are a difficult proposition at the best of times. "Of course, there are defects that are clearly unacceptable in the surface finish of a superyacht. However, there is an incredible number of large-scale and small-scale factors that will influence the outcome of an application," he explains. "We recommend a project-centred approach, whereby owner, yard and applicator work together to establish what can be achieved with the chosen products in the prevailing conditions on a given budget and within the agreed schedule. Sample panels, mock-ups and reference areas on board can all be helpful for certain aspects of this. Once an area on board has been accepted visually, the surface quality can be measured and the results used as a benchmark for the project."

In 2011, one of the first industry standards to measure exterior paint- work above the waterline was introduced by Pinmar, the paint applicator specialist subsidiary of GYG. The Pinmar Standard created a comprehensive definition of the premium superyacht finish. Since its launch, the standard has been used successfully in many new-build and refit contracts and has led to the adoption of an empirical approach to assessing paint quality rather than relying purely on aesthetic opinion. ICOMIA's publication The Technical Guideline on Minimum Acceptable Finish and Appearance for Superyacht Gloss Coatings was also published in 2011 and the concept of a paint standard caught on as other formats also emerged.

ICOMIA's intention was similar in that it supported yards and applicators within the superyacht sector to define their own quality by establishing a baseline standard. "The ICOMIA guidelines are the 'standard' that is most commonly referred to," says Wrede. "These serve mainly to delineate the bottom line of what is acceptable in superyacht coatings and what isn't. And they aren't, properly speaking, a standard at all unless agreed between parties for a specific project. In fact, most industry 'standards' act more as guidelines for what is expected. They do not, as a rule, draw a line in the sand and say everything above the line is fine and everything below it is unacceptable. Reality requires more nuance, as usual."

The Pinmar Standard 2.0

While the original Pinmar Standard was designed as an empirically based target to facilitate the acceptance process, it has been misused as a mechanism to fail paint jobs rather than measure performance and quality. At the same time, superyacht painting has developed, with yachts growing significantly in size, and the market has evolved to include more paint manufacturers, types of products, methods of application and measuring instruments. The Pinmar team came to realise that the original standard no longer had the required scope to satisfy a varied market. Therefore, at The Superyacht Forum 2017, it was relaunched as the Pinmar Standard 2.0 (PS2) in recognition of the evolution of the paint market.

"The average size of yacht we are painting has doubled; however, paint projects are still being completed within the same timescales," explains Remy Millott, CEO at GYG. "Furthermore, different manufacturers have come into the market, different topcoats and methods of application, and every yacht and environment in which it is painted can differ. Therefore, we needed a standard that deals with the growing industry, the different products and processes and the changing environments we are working in."

Key to ensuring that the PS2 works is through the aforementioned reference area, a part of the process that was often overlooked in the original standard. "Every yacht, environment and product can differ, so although we have industry targets at the beginning of a project, the actual standard can only be a standard when it is set from a delta, which has to be a reference area, and you cannot pre-agree to a standard without it," continues Millott. "If you paint a reference area, agree to it visually and measure it, only then can you set the standard for that particular

yacht and paint system.”

"We needed a standard that deals with the growing industry, the different products and processes and the changing environments we are working in."

To do this, the team creating the new standard embarked on a programme of painting more than 100 test panels. “We tested acrylics versus polyurethanes, conventional versus electrostatic, the difference between white and dark blue, and the difference between a finish and a show coat,” explains sherpa63’s Ken Hickling, who assisted Pinmar in developing the new standard. “We spoke to any manufacturer who wanted us to do their numbers. For example, for brand ‘x’ on a blue panel, acrylics have average gloss of 93, and polyurethanes have average gloss of 94.5. Different products and finishes may not look different, but they measure differently, so it is necessary to shift the standard around to accommodate this.”

To further allow for the impact of the many variables that crop up in paint application, another key to the development of the new Pinmar Standard 2.0 was the creation of acceptance criteria for each vessel using a Six Sigma-style system. “This is a method by which a paint job aims for excellence and if something is far off target it will be rejected, but it means that near-target results will be accepted,” adds Hickling. This adjustment allows for the growing size of superyachts, which require thousands of square metres of hull and superstructures to be painted, and recognises the logic that not all areas will be identical but will still be within accepted tolerances and should, therefore, be accepted.

The final significant change included in the new standard takes into account how the industry currently measures paint. The Pinmar Standard had originally been created with only one measuring instrument in mind – the wave scanner. While some uphold this as the best method of measurement, in reality it was often not the method of choice. The PS2 has been broadened to reflect this and allow for the use of different instruments. While this does mean that orange-peel classification and dullness value have been taken out of the PS2, Hickling points out that there is

no reason why surveyors cannot still request these elements to be included in the acceptance criteria.

The purpose of the PS2, therefore, is to outline what should be considered a quality paint job according to the specifications and variations of each individual yacht project. It intends to define the relevant parameters, measurement process and target values to be used in specifying, measuring and accepting paintwork. The aim is to facilitate acceptance through realistic contractual performance promises that are easy to understand and which reflect reality. By doing so, the new standard should increase on-time delivery and save on additional costs.

A full examination of paint standards, plus industry feedback about the Pinmar Standard 2.0, appears in issue 185 of The Superyacht Report, out now.

Image courtesy of GYG

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