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# YACHT *Valley*

HOW DUTCH EXCELLENCE  
ADDS VALUE TO YOUR YACHT

REDEFINING REFIT QUALITY


TAKING EXPERTISE TO THE WORLD

AT HOME ABROAD

THE MOST ART PER SQUARE KM  
IN THE WORLD

HOLLAND ART CITIES





# REDEFINING REFIT QUALITY

HOW DUTCH EXCELLENCE ADDS  
VALUE TO YOUR YACHT

As more owners decide to upgrade their current yacht and others look to refurbish their new purchase to meet personal requirements, the search for the right place to refit is very much on. As Daan Balk, managing director of Europe's leading specialised refit yard explains, Holland is uniquely placed to meet the demands for 'good-as new' yachts. And starting on page 12, we also focus on the superior selection of refit/rebuild options offered by other top Dutch yards.

a problem. First they should give feedback to their superiors who then contact the owner and discuss the costs and the time that will be required to fix it. The owner can then decide how to proceed - this is the only way to keep things running smoothly and costs in check."

## AN AIR OF REALISM

Clients have to be realistic too according to Balk. "There is a temptation to try and have the overdue maintenance of the previous ten years taken care of while also making the boat ready for the next ten. But expecting repairs, maintenance and renovations all at once is rarely feasible... You would probably be better off buying a new boat. Having said that, we are acutely aware of what a refit involves and always make sure we can deliver. When busy with a large project we won't start looking for anything else until we are two thirds through and can accurately assess when we might be finished. As a refit develops it often takes longer than initially planned and our goal is to protect the client's interests."

Much of Balk's openness comes from the knowledge gained since joining his father's yard at the age of 20. "Although the yachts and projects have increased in size, much has stayed the same. Whether it concerns amounts of 10,000 or ten million euros, people have a certain amount they expect to spend and it is our responsibility not to go over that figure. The principle is exactly the same. Sometimes we feel that a client doesn't fully grasp the situation and if requests are made that seem unnecessarily expensive or time-consuming we will do our best to be frank and ensure there is no room for misunderstandings." One of the crucial aspects of many refits is ensuring one cannot see the difference between the 'new' parts and the 'old'. And according to Balk, this is another area that people underestimate. "I recently learned a valuable lesson from one of our clients, an owner of a classic vessel from the Dunkirk Association. His yacht was from 1934 and he explained how important it was to hold on to the history of the boat. Returning it to its original state

would give it an unnatural feel as the boat already had a lifetime of experiences. These experiences can be perceived as tree rings and should be cherished and nurtured tastefully. And he was absolutely right. The elements of the ship that were added in the 1950s or 1970s were also beautiful and restoring them tastefully helped maintain the character and history of the boat."

## THE DUTCH MENTALITY

While Balk is justifiably proud of what his own yard can achieve, he does not hesitate to extol the virtues of the other quality yards in Holland that offer refits alongside their yachtbuilding activities. "The Dutch mentality is ideal for refits, which often consist of reconstructing a specific part of a vessel and are more complex than building a new yacht from drawings. We know no other way than to make clear agreements on costs and delivery times and explain the processes involved in advance. You get what you pay for in Holland because we are more passionate about shipbuilding and competitive by nature."



## SEVEN GENERATIONS AT THE HELM

A family-run yard since the 1700s, Balk Shipyard has historical pedigree to back up its 21st-century facilities. Opened in 2007 after a multi-million refurbishment, construction halls and workshops are state of the art and ongoing investments recently included a paint spraying cabin. Uniquely for this part of the world, the slipway installation lifts vessels of up to 1200 tons out of the water. Working with some of the finest comakers in Holland, Balk has dedicated in-house departments for metalwork, painting and other keynote disciplines. Almost every aspect of a refit can be handled in-house, from extending the superstructure to relaying the deck, from repairing navigation equipment to decorating a cabin, from installing the latest systems to complete engine overhauls.