

YACHTS

INTERNATIONAL

THE TOP

1000

Our insider's guide to the largest yachts

LÜRSEN'S 249'
NORTHERN STAR
WORLD-CLASS
EXPLORER

CITADEL YACHTS
MISS LISA
92' OF SOLID ELEGANCE

VSY 203' ROMA
SEDUCTIVE, PRACTICAL
AND GREEN

ARCADIA 85
CLEARLY DIFFERENT





News from Derecktor Painting *Cakewalk*

Captain Bill Zinser is a busy man. When we spoke to the project manager of *Cakewalk* for this article, he had one big deadline in mind: the end of May. That was the target date for *Cakewalk* to roll out of its shed at the Derecktor Shipyards' Bridgeport, Conn., yard. By early April there were still between 430 to 440 people working full time on the project, 12 hours a day. And then there was the night shift. This not-so-enviable schedule went to one specific group of sub-contractors, the hull painters.

The job of painting *Cakewalk*, while an amazing challenge and great opportunity to showcase skills, has to be intimidating. *Cakewalk*, 281', may not be the longest yacht built in the U.S., but it most certainly is the most voluminous. The latest and largest in a series of vessels owned by an American yachtsman, *Cakewalk* is also the largest yacht to be built in the U.S. in nearly 80 years. The 343' (including bowsprit) *Corsair IV*, built at Bath Iron Works in Maine, set the benchmark in 1930. But at 2,998 gross tons *Cakewalk* will surpass even J.P. Morgan's yacht in terms of volume.

The owner chose an American shipyard precisely to prove a point, that an American-built superyacht large enough to figure in the Top 100 (it will be in next year) can be as good if not better than one built at one of the world's leading European superyacht shipyards.

Derecktor, experienced in meeting challenging commercial contracts as well as building an extensive list of sail- and motor-yachts, won the bid. All around the stakes are high.

When finished, the yacht will sport a magnificent glossy blue hull and immaculate white superstructure highlighting Tim Heywood's elegant and curvy styling.

A dark hull is classic and beautiful but hard to do. Darker colors tend to highlight imperfections; runs, blisters, fish eyes or a dull coat will stand out. Darker colors also absorb sunlight more than lighter ones. A white hull will not exceed a temperature of 140 F; by contrast dark surfaces "can see service temperatures exceed 200 F in direct sunlight, which can then quickly be followed by a rapid cooling cycle that places heavy demands on the primer and filler systems. If done incorrectly this can result in shrink-back and expose surface imperfections you would never see in a lighter color," explains Chris Toole, global senior product manager for Awlgrip.

To maximize chances for success, the surface fairing must be impeccable, while the environment needs to be (for dark as well as light colors) at the right temperature (ideally 64 to 86 F), humidity (45 to 65 percent) and as close to dust-free as humanly

possible outside of a spray booth. Not to speak of the application of the various coats themselves, which, naturally, need to be perfect from primers to fillers to the shiny final coat.

Two contractors split the humongous job of painting *Cakewalk*. To this day, most of the work is being done using hand tools (robotic painting has not caught on in the yachting industry).

Fort Lauderdale-based R & L Yacht Refinishing handled the curvaceous aluminum superstructure and Atlantic Coast Yacht Painting, the impressive steel hull. By early April there were 35 painters working on the hull and 39 on the deckhouse. Painting *Cakewalk* will have taken nearly a year from start to finish. During that time, however, there were months of slower progress to allow for other priorities, such as welding. The work on the rest of the yacht does not stop for the painters and smart scheduling is important.

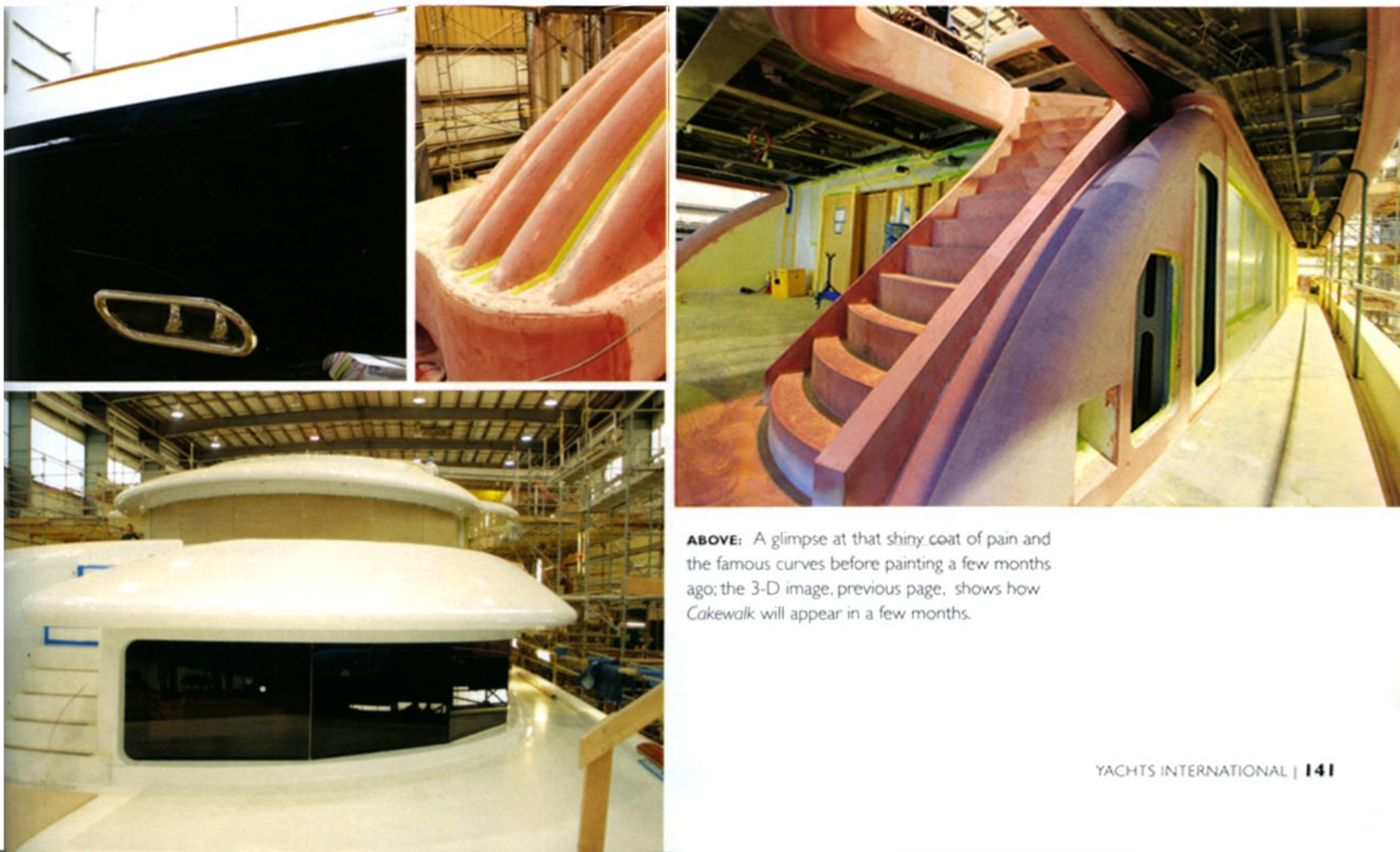
When all is said and done, about 340 gallons will have been required for the superstructure's topcoat alone, estimates R & L's Stephen Hill. The hull, which represents about one third of the total volume, is a canvas of about 14,000 square feet in area. Final sanding before the final coat will be done by hand to achieve a finish comparable to that of a luxury automobile. The painters may be a little biased, but still that shiny hull gets a lot of attention. "The paint is the first and last thing you see. The fairing and the painting are what set a yacht apart from a ship. A cruise ship may be luxurious, but if you look at the paint, you can see it still is a ship. We strive for an automotive finish," says Atlantic Coast Yacht Painting President Tom Kantlehner, who in fact started years ago finishing cars. Beside having experienced painters, a bright, well-ventilated and clean

environment, smart scheduling and a fair surface, what goes on top of the steel and aluminum is equally as important.

Capt. Zinser chose Awlgrip for the job. "I've been using Awlgrip since the 1970s. Back then it was called Alumigrip and it was used on airplanes," he said. What eventually became Awlgrip was first applied to a 36' Hatteras. Soon the innovative product based on linear polyester urethane, caught the attention of the marine sector, said Steve Smith, Awlgrip's VP of key accounts. The company, then based in St. Louis, later developed primers and fairing compounds. In 2002, Awlgrip became part of Amsterdam-based Akzo Nobel, an industrial conglomerate that is also the world's largest paint and coating company. As such it has a dedicated laboratory, based in England, with some 70 full-time chemists, testing (surface profiles, film, adhesion and corrosion) and developing new products.

On *Cakewalk*, nine Awlgrip products were used—eight for the paint alone, and most of them in several layers: a chromate-free anti-corrosive pre-primer (a recently introduced product), a "no sand" anti-corrosive substrate primer, fairing compound, two different surfacing primers, a finishing primer, a showcoat and topcoat finish. Toole is quick to point that this treatment is not reserved to megayachts but can benefit any painted vessel of any size.

Paint is never a small job, but on a yacht like *Cakewalk* it is a major project. In the end, it will represent somewhere between three to five percent of the total cost. But it will be worth it. After all, that perfect gloss is what sets a yacht apart from a ship.



ABOVE: A glimpse at that shiny coat of pain and the famous curves before painting a few months ago; the 3-D image, previous page, shows how *Cakewalk* will appear in a few months.