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Paladino points out the course of the Lusben shipyard after Casareto's departure

Nicola Capuzzo · Thursday, July 4th, 2024

Leghorn – The presentation in Livorno of the new inspection pit for sailing yachts was an opportunity to understand what the new course of the Lusben shipyard will be in the aftermath of the departure of CEO Giorgio Casareto, who recently took the helm at Marina Portosole Sanremo after spending 30 years with the Azimut Benetti group. His exit comes almost simultaneously with that of Benetti's sales director, Sebastiano Fanizza, who has been succeeded by Daniela Petrozzi.

Speaking with SUPER YACHT 24 about Lusben's future is Commercial Director Gianni Paladino.

Let's start with Casareto's departure to understand the reasons and the expected evolution after this change at the shipyard's helm...

“Firstly, I cannot delve into the specifics of what we are evaluating as a division in terms of future plans or actions, as it is purely an internal matter. However, there is certainly a great deal of satisfaction and appreciation for what has been achieved. These two years under Casareto's management have introduced a more ‘corporate’ organizational concept at the central level, which was lacking, and which has integrated our shipyards, already efficient and well-functioning, into a system. This modern concept positions the company with vertical structures and a corporate environment where the company continues to operate vertically but is horizontally interconnected. This organizational approach has brought us to where we are today and undoubtedly serves as an excellent starting point for understanding how to move forward. Marco Valle has been appointed on an interim basis to succeed Giorgio Casareto”.

What numbers has Lusben achieved in recent years and how do you foresee the closure of this year?

“Last year was particularly brilliant: we closed with 45 million euros, an increase compared to the previous year. This year, we expect to do slightly less than last year due to two factors: last year, we had a peak due to concurrent significant work on many of our clients' boats, which occurs at cyclical intervals. Additionally, we had refurbishment work at the Livorno basin and others that made some areas of the facility unusable for 4 months. Therefore, we will close this year with

numbers lower than last year's".

For the future, what trend do you foresee?

"This facility will be increasingly operational thanks to additional capacities that we didn't have before and our reaching full operational capability. Furthermore, once again, we see some projects beginning to come in. We are confident that the coming years will see the recovery of this year's gap with further growth".

To understand the need for investment in your new inspection pit for sailing yachts up to 70 meters, did you base this decision on research or studies?

"Actually, I understand it might seem unusual, but the yachting community operates largely through word of mouth: owners, captains, they meet in a chat where they exchange all information and place extreme trust in their group. Knowing this situation, we embarked on this venture by listening to their needs, which converged into the creation of a single reference hub in the Mediterranean. Investing in infrastructure and services is part of our development plan. We started with customers but will continue with partnerships with suppliers who have specific expertise, know-how, and a culture related to these sailing yachts. This is a step we consider crucial".

Will you create a division for sailing yachts?

"The answer lies in how this area evolves. I expect there will be a need to structure something dedicated, increasingly formalized. Our target will be mega yachts over 52 meters in length, both motor and sailing – we've already serviced seven of these this year. Other opportunities will come with the development of the marina – so we'll see growth as we move forward. It's a question that we are continually asking ourselves".

In the meantime, what kind of market are you facing?

"We need to respond to a growing market and be effective in providing solutions to our numerous clients. We work to organize our capacity within our facility, which already includes a dry dock, a pit, a ship-lift, yards, areas, and lounges. In a highly saturated market with few major players, being able to boast of having extensive infrastructure with potential, space, and strong organization are key elements".

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Gianni Paladino

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