



Bruno Guidi,
founder of Guidi
Srl and art patron

Edoardo Napodano

The art of yachting

NAUTECH MEETS THE GUIDI FAMILY DURING THE EXHIBITION AT THE GALATA MUSEO DEL MARE OF MARCO LODOLA AND JILL MATHIS BY IVAN QUARONI ENTITLED "A NEW KIND OF PATRONAGE: IMAGINING THE FUTURE"

The message of the Guidi products that comes across in the exhibition: "the challenge of composing the identikit of the future, but starting from present reality".
Do you work more with production or maintenance yards? So from your point of view, direct or even indirect, what importance does the "new" and "used" have in this period – do you also have relationships with the end user (skippers for example)?

We work directly with some big production yards and, through distributors, with the major Italian and international groups. Recently the importance of the refitting sector has increased considerably. We get many contact requests from end-users, owners, skippers... we happily give them all technical advice and then direct them to our distributors.

How is your distribution organised in Italy and abroad, how much is direct (if this is the case) and how much goes through local distributors, how does the relationship need to be to work, what do you expect from a distributor?

Our main distribution channel, both in Italy and abroad, is through wholesalers and retailers, though some yards are supplied directly. For our product distribution we contacted serious and reliable companies, with which over many years we have built up collaboration based on dialogue and transparency.

Of your main clients, what is, roughly, the percentage of Italian, European and extra European clients?

Over the years distribution overseas has been increasing, and today is about 60%, 40% within the European Community and 20% outside Europe.

Which markets are showing most interest today and in the recent and remote past?

The main foreign market for us is Great Britain, where we have been working with the same distributor for more than 30 years. But we also work well and constantly in other European (Holland, France, Spain...) and non-European markets.

The company's history spans several yachting "eras": can you tell us how yachting has evolved, and what are the characteristics of the various decades? How have products and machinery and production systems evolved?

The evolution of yachting has led to a demand for products of increasingly high quality. So the various machines necessarily must be avant-garde, to meet the new process requirements. This is why we invest constantly, on average

every two years, above all in new technologies for machine tools and test benches.

How much is the Italian identity of the product and the company important and is it always a dogma?

We are seeing the internationalisation of some companies and yards with positive and negative effects.

Keeping products 100% made in Italy is essential for guaranteeing absolute quality. The idea of moving our production to make easy profits has never crossed our mind. We have always been convinced supporters of made in Italy and, even in difficult economic crises, we have always produced in Italy and used Italian raw materials. We are determined to continue with this business model.

In your market sector or sectors, how much does price matter and how much does quality (long life, reliability etc) or in what proportion? Where and how are Asian (Chinese? Others?) Competitors dangerous and what can one do as a business, as the system (trade associations, Ucina etc), as a nation (government initiatives)?

Our company has always concentrated on long life, quality and safety. We have never let ourselves be dragged into market sectors that only look at price. We have been members of UCINA since 1985 and we recognise the efforts the Association has made, but at government level so far we have been rather disappointed: too often yachting has been penalised by taxes and unfair attitudes. Unfortunately the results, and they are negative, are evident.

What fairs have you taken part in over the years, what do you think of them and what do you expect? Mets is coming and recently you were in Genoa.

Genoa is talked about a lot, almost always only in negative terms, but for more than 50 years we have had the biggest boat show in the world.

We have taken part in the Genoa Show since 1982 and got to know most of our customers and distributors there.

We are very sorry that the Show doesn't attract the interest it once did. Besides METS in Amsterdam we have taken part in shows in Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Singapore. Indirectly, through our distributors, we are also present in all the main shows even outside Europe (Australia, New Zealand, United Arab Emirates...).

What technical problems have you solved for particular yachts or uses, any anecdotes?

Over the years we have developed 13 patents, solving a lot of problems in terms of applications and supplying several ad hoc solutions for our customers. The changes we have introduced into the sector have always been thoroughly welcomed. The most recent innovation is the non-stick valve, which solves the well-known problems caused by the valves traditionally used in yachting. Our new valve has been a small revolution in the sector.

Can you explain why your company is in Novara, can we talk of a plumbing district?

How do logistics, supplies and raw materials work, how do you recruit and train (externally, internally) and what



Guidi Srl in Pavilion B of the Genoa show during the 2014 International Boat Show (in the foreground the cardboard replica of the yacht Camuffo by Chris Gilmour)



kind of personnel does the company need?

The company is in the Novara district, in Valsesia to be precise, because I was born and grew up here. As you say, we are in the "plumbing district" and perhaps this drove me to differentiate production: I wanted to produce something different. Since I had some contacts and friends in yachting I began developing specific products for the sector and, seeing the success our accessories had, we continued in this direction.

The patronage and cultural aspect of the company seems a praiseworthy rarity, a surprise in our sector which is often strictly "commercial", almost a kind of long-term "universal" promotion: tell us about it, how did it start and why?

Our approach to contemporary art came about "timidly", almost by accident, in 2007, when we met the American photographer Jill Mathis. We engaged her to produce our monograph for our 40th anniversary, in 2008. The photographs of this artist fascinated us considerably and led us to continue what was for us a very pleasing new experience. The various artists we got to know over the years and with whom we collaborated (Alessandro Ciffo, Elizabeth Aro, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Chris Gilmour, Marco Lodola, in addition to Jill Mathis) filled us with enthusiasm and transmitted their passion through their skill and creativity, their intuition and ability to surprise us. The encounter with art gave us such great emotions that today for us it is unthinkable to end this link or go back to traditional ways of promoting the company. Investing in art, besides surprising us and bringing us great joy every time, brings us tangible results in the appreciation of the works produced, which can always be presented to a new and interesting public through dedicated exhibitions. An example is Chris Gilmour's boat which we took to the Genoa Show this year with a couple of photographs by Jill Mathis. The appreciation we have seen through the various forms of cultural expression we have tried out so far would have been unthinkable – and unattainable – goals using traditional forms of advertising and marketing.

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