

# THE REFIT *Question?*

Special Advertising Section

The average refit, he said, takes about three weeks. The average refit of a larger yacht, say 100 to 150 feet, requires six months, or more.

As any good yard will attest, most of the customers are regulars, and the majority of new customers come from referrals. Advertising draws in a significant number of new clients and at yards that also build new yachts, from those owners. That's true at Hinckley, Townsend Bay Marine, Jarrett Bay Boatworks, Huckins, and other diversified builders.

The refit business is more than dollars and cents. It often contains a strong emotional element. James Hope, one of the service gurus at Huckins Yachts, said that he sees a lot of customers coming to the yard to refurbish a treasured old boat and often spending far more than they'll ever get in return. This has been the case, whether they own an antique Huckins or another brand, sighting the recent refit of a 1962 Bertram 31 to make his point.

"We've got two or three guys like that," said Paul Zeusche, CEO of Townsend Bay

Marine. One customer, a man in his early seventies, stopped racing and sold his Santa Cruz 70. He also owned a Swan 46 from the middle 1980s and loved it. Zeusche said that this customer has lavished as much attention on this boat as he may have granted a member of the family. According to Zeusche, the yard's relationship with the Swan sailor is based on trust—that everything will get done correctly and on time. "You got to look after your people," Zeusche said.

Eli Dana, who coordinates a lot of the functions of Newport Shipyard, agrees. The yard doesn't build new boats, but it enjoys a healthy diversification, a loyal customer base, a good reputation—and a great location. In addition to dockage, facilities for the crews of yachts that layover at the yard, and storage, Newport Shipyard handles a wide variety of refit jobs, from changing the shafts and struts to completely gutting and redoing the interior of a 120-foot yacht. Dana said that the yard benefits from its satisfied customers spreading the word, and part of creating this satisfied customer base is communications

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between the personnel at the yard and each customer—whether they're the owner, the captain or project manager. The casual atmosphere, possible in part by the relatively small size of the business, has won many repeat clients.

"Location, location, location," runs the litany of real estate agents, and the same thing applies to yacht yards. Jarrett Bay Boatworks is located at mile marker 198 on the ICW in Beaufort, North Carolina. It occupies 35 acres of the 175-acre full-service Jarrett Bay Marine Industrial Park. The complex offers one-stop shopping for yachtsmen and draws yachts from a wide range of locations. One recent project, a 40-foot Gamefisherman, made its way to Jarrett Bay via ship from Hawaii, then on its own bottom and one engine, north on the ICW to JBBW. The boat



  
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BEFORE



AFTER

Photos from Jarrett Bay Boatworks

received new engines, fresh paint, Lexan windows, a new genset and a handful of cosmetic upgrades. JBBW also builds the famous Jarrett Bay sportfishing boats.

Repowering and painting are among the most popular refit chores, which makes perfect sense when you think about the punishment engines and exterior finishes suffer. Although customers may ask for their favorite finish, one that's popular with the paint shop at Townsend Bay is the Alexseal system, from Mankiewicz Coatings in St. Louis, Missouri. Like any good finish, Alexseal offers a complete line of products—sealing primers to durable topcoats—all of which contribute to easy application and fairing and long-lasting color.

In the classic car hobby, one popular saying goes like this: "Don't crush 'em; restore 'em." The same applies to older well-found yachts. Happy refit. □

Contacts:

#### **Alexseal**

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#### **Huckins Yachts**

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#### **Jarrett Bay Boatworks**

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