

Roberto Franzoni
interviews
Giovanni Lanza
Seanet's President

SEANET EVO SOLUTIONS

SeaNet is a private enterprise which possesses vast experience and is notoriously renowned across the globe for personalised made to measure projects in marine applications and much more. Headquarters are in Geneva but project work and centre of operations are situated in Genoa port. Metal workshops are in Morgano in north Italy, with a branch in Monfalcone and one in Miami Florida. SeaNet has been assisting ship owners and yards with a complete range of product lines and innovative solutions ranging from feasibility studies, 3D project design work, to turnkey plants and services to cover their ships' operational lives. More than 4,000 SeaNet systems have been installed on board cruise ships, yachts, ferries, and military vessels around the world since 1975 providing full compliance with the most stringent safety norms. SeaNet has acquired great competence in safety systems and thorough working knowledge deployed now to satisfy ship owners' needs. This know how has been put to good use and SeaNet can always deliver valuable, reliable, high quality and safe solutions while dealing with highly complex challenges. Yachts' ever increasing dimensions has meant that SeaNet's naval systems have converged and have penetrated the yachting sector as well with interesting results not only from a technical /technologic view point but from an aesthetical/design one too. We discuss all of this in Genoa in Giovanni Lanza de Cristoforis's offices overlooking the port. President de Cristoforis begins by saying: "After having dealt with naval requirements for as many as twenty years, back in the nineties we began to follow up on requests coming from the yachting sector. And downsizing a little since we haven't been dealing with anything less than 50/60 metres, we feel we are in a position to offer that segment good opportunities, as we're adapting large and complex systems onto a smaller scale. And what's more to the point, is that large charter yachts are getting closer to the same safety norms ships have to comply to. Our competencies extend further than safety norms require in naval terms. We have a great deal of experience in sliding manual and motorized watertight, and splashtight doors. Sergio Guidetti general manager and I are both IMO advisors (International Maritime Organisation) the international body governing safety at sea.

What's the level of applied technology for these devices?

Steel works which are worth about half and the machinery which is made up of computers, plants, safety the other. This means it is easy enough to switch to moving stern ramps or shell doors. Or also to a stern transom opening out as a crane comes out. We've got ourselves a good deal of experience with Seabourn small luxury class cruise ships for 300 passengers only. The ship owner wanted to offer the kind of luxury normally found on luxury yachts like a beach club in the stern and still it was always a ship, a small one at that, just 200 metres.

Where did you begin from in yachting?

From CRN's "Azteca" for which we built an opening transom to host a 100 square metre beach club equipped with another closing device in the form of a stairway. For a Greek ship owner we drew up a watertight door to install on a ship which had been converted into a yacht. We did all the maths necessary, calculated the size and loads of the various bits and pieces for the moving parts as well and the required electronics to go with the installation. Well they installed everything by themselves without even asking for our assistance. Some time ago I saw a Picasso exhibition in Barcellona which had some of his early works – he began very early on – which were the exact copy of picture postcards. There was no way I could spot any difference at all. He became a cubist only much later. Well without comparing ourselves to Picasso, we chew up 20,000 hours per year on automated systems alone. It's our daily bread and butter and we manage to produce really complex plants. Obviously some of them are very different from others, as for example the watertight doors we produced for the Mose in Venice. The doors or better the hatches are between 380 and 450 metres wide. Inside these there are several watertight compartments with submarine type accesses which lead into decompression chambers cut out of the walls themselves. These chambers allow access from inside when needed. This kind of technology could appeal to gigayacht owners since the yachts are after all big toys and could make the owners proud, in having a decompression chamber on board.

What about metal workshops and carpentry do you do them here?

No we assemble all of the hydraulics here which are manufactured by others and we deal with the electronics and electrical sides that we do here as well as the integrated bits which are the core end of every plant and which can be adapted for each specific situation however complex. We also draw up apps. To use Plc devices (Programmable Logic Controller) which are little monitor free programmable computers running and monitoring on board control systems as well. Metal workshops carry out their work in the Morgano plant in North Italy near Treviso.



What percentage of your total turnover derives from yachting?

About 30%. It had gone down a bit due to the work we were involved with in Venice on the Mose project. Over the last few years large yachts slowed down a little too.

Is there any other competitor in your line of production and applied installations as diversified as yourselves? Or rather does competition come from segmented firms, meaning, one say for yachting, another for naval plants and so on?

Up until the other day a few were as segmented as we are, perhaps with different parcelling but on a national level. Abroad for instance there's TTS which is a multinational group we cannot compete with. They carry out great big works, maybe even cargoes, maybe in China as well. But then we're not interested in that. In yachting though some firms manufacture hatches only, but not watertight ones.

A shipyard like Lürssen goes to you less than TTS because they're from North Europe as well?

Lürssen mainly goes to its direct supply chain. We supplied them once, and they used our products on another vessel. But working so far apart to us is more complex.

As for research what do you do?

Today with Selmar which was doing much of the stuff we do in yachting and on ships carrying out scientific work, we've created several business units. Cruise ships, yachts, military vessels, "scientific" ships. Our merge with Selmar drove us to create a technologic incubator/think tank to study innovative products which we could install on board in the future or to apply the findings to existing products we've already installed. We're currently working on new systems by which to manoeuvre watertight doors and large hatches on yachts, and on tomorrow's watertight doors as well. We test each of these products and fine tune them so when the client calls and we're given the opportunity we'll install it.

Have you already installed some of these innovative solutions?

Here in Genoa on the ship Mariotti is building, we're talking about a 155 metre yacht destined to the Gulf area. We're building 25 metre by 12 side doors weighing 45 tons with twin sets of hinges which allow the doors to slide open upwards or downwards with fully automated systems. These are the first of the kind in the world to possess this feature and versatility of use.

For further information: www.seanetgroup.ch

