

BALTIC YACHTS JAKOBSTAD

Jakobstad Production Building heralds new dawn for Baltic Yachts



Baltic Yachts' purpose-built Production Building was officially opened on 27 March 2009. Positioned just metres from the shore in Jakobstad, the 80-metre building enables Baltic Yachts to take on more ambitious boat-building projects than ever before. Already the Baltic 197, the so-called Panamax project, is based in the new building, the enormous carbon-fibre composite hull having been carefully transported by a specially-assembled truck in November from Baltic's other premises in Bosund 20km inland.

Although the Panamax move went without incident, and took just two and a half hours from Bosund to Jakobstad, the logistics of safely transporting such an enormous structure are complicated and expensive. Having the new facility right by the water's edge will make future large-scale projects much easier from a logistical point of view.

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Production Manager Christer Lill describes the Production Building as “the first step in our vision for the future of Baltic Yachts”. He says the new building will enable the company to build boats up to 260 feet long. “And if some project came up which was bigger, I think we would find a solution for that also.” The building has 5,000 square metres of floor space, and a total volume of 60,000 cubic metres. The roof height underneath the cranes is 12 metres.

The company invested heavily in state-of-the-art heating and ventilation systems. The building is heated from Jakobstad town's main heating supply, and there is an 8-metre-diameter wheel on the heat exchanger, which ensures that much of the heat from the boatbuilding process can be put back into supplying heat for the Production Building. So environmentally, the building is very efficient. The working conditions are excellent too. Around 30 per cent of the total investment in the building went into ventilation systems, with the air in the building being replaced at the rate of 2.5 times per hour.



Ventilation system



Paint shop

A new project which is likely to benefit from the new facility is a Baltic 170 Custom, a high-performance cruising boat incorporating a high degree technology, hidden within the lines of a traditional, class design. While Baltic Yachts has never shied away from accepting large-scale projects, the company that hopes that the Jakobstad building facility will attract more customers looking for a boatbuilder of Baltic's pedigree.

As Christer Lill points out, the other benefit of the new waterside facility is the ease with which boats can now be serviced. The Baltic 147, *Visione*, recently returned for a winter refit six years after she departed these shores and currently sits alongside the *Panamax*. *Visione*'s skipper Garth Brewer says it was never originally

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the plan to bring the boat back to the yard, but now with the easy access by water to the new building, it made it the obvious place for the work to be done to Visione. Lill hopes that other owners and skippers will now want to bring their Baltic yachts back to the yard of their origin for servicing, with the long-term plan being for service work to constitute 25% of the yard's business.



Conference room with seaview

Lill sees the new building as just the first phase of a new era for Baltic Yachts. He is already planning for the construction of a similar-sized building adjacent to the current building, and would like to see it in operation in another five years. A possible third phase is also being discussed, to construct a smaller office building for the company's administration and marketing staff. The new facility at Jakobstad is certainly impressive, but for Christer Lill it is only the start of things to come.

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