

THE ABSOLUTE WAY

Founded in 2002, Absolute Yachts has grown to become one of the most forward-thinking and financially stable shipyards in the industry



A key characteristic of Absolute Yachts' craft are the signs they have been designed and engineered by people who go boating. That may sound obvious but it is not always the case and with Absolute, whether it's the amount of storage on board, their safe and practical deck spaces or the little details that make day-to-day life on the boat that bit more enjoyable, there is a tangible feeling that the people responsible for creating them have boating in their blood.

The shipyard's President, Angelo Gobbi, was invited to join Absolute in 2002 having sold the boat building business that bore his name in 2002, and his story is one that typifies the passion and enthusiasm for boats that is shared across the Absolute family. As a 15-year-old, Gobbi would watch with fascination as boats streamed up and down the local river; he fell in love with them instantly and by the age of 20 had built his first motorboat, founding Cantieri Nautici Gobbi just four years later.

Like the rest of the Absolute Yachts board, Gobbi is heavily involved in the business and

will spend many hours on the ground in the shipyard. He is proud of the yard's unique ability to keep every aspect of design and build in-house, meaning it can be agile in response to dealer and owner requirements. "For each boat we design I have always pursued absolute quality and functionality," he explains, "and focussed on boat owners and how they would go to sea so we could fully understand and meet their needs."

ABSOLUTE PASSION

Absolute Yachts co-founder and Chief of Research and Development Sergio Maggi worked for Gobbi, drawing boats with him as an 18-year-old and still takes immense satisfaction from successfully delivering a new boat. He says: "I always had a passion for drawing and I turned it into a career.

"I discovered a very inspiring industry which is impossible not to fall in love with. Each time I deliver a new boat, meeting the owners and talking with them, listening to their positive feedback, views and opinions, is not only very satisfying, but above all an inspiration to keep renewing ourselves." ▶



OPPOSITE Absolute Yachts' board members and shareholders are heavily involved in the day-to-day running of the shipyard

ABOVE The Navetta 73 is the flagship of the range and exemplifies Absolute's ambition to build comfortable cruising yachts that drip with Italian style

He reinforces the importance of an open dialogue with dealers and customers which allows them to design yachts that deliver exactly what the client is looking for. "We constantly create opportunities to meet and talk, so that this continuous and mutual exchange of information highlights the needs of our end customers," he explains. "In this way, instead of following trends, we try to analyse and evaluate them so we can set a trend. This is also another way for us to keep our eyes on the present of the market and to chart our course to create today what will become the new trend tomorrow."

The team recognised that the market was less concerned about outright performance and more focussed on comfort, refinement and efficiency, which led to the development of the successful Navetta range. Maggi adds: "We were inspired by

a 'house-boat' concept, with plenty of living space and comfort for long distance cruising, without sacrificing the Italian style of the interiors and the bold, sinuous lines of the exteriors. Also, our product is a moving vehicle that must ensure quality and safety, which are key in every new boat."

Maggi is responsible for one of Absolute's greatest innovations, the Integrated Structural System or ISS. This is just one of a host of factors that puts Absolute at the forefront of boat building technology within its 48,000 sqm facility in Piacenza. "I was inspired by a game I played as a child with interlocking blocks that I used to create a variety of objects," Maggi explains. "I imagined applying this interlocking system to the structural parts of our boats and, after implementing it, we had excellent results in terms of solidity and robustness of the supporting structure and



ABOVE LEFT The design process is collaborative with feedback from customers and dealers being passed back to board members, designers and engineers ABOVE MIDDLE A hull mould is flipped inside the construction facility ABOVE RIGHT Two Navetta models await the next stage of their production journey



ABOVE From constructing the ISS and laying the hull to fit-out and tank testing, every element of design and build is done in-house at the Absolute Yachts shipyard in Piacenza

BELOW The 62 Fly is one model in the latest generation of Absolute flybridge yachts. Volvo Penta IPS950 engines ensure smooth, efficient cruising and a top speed of more than 30 knots



incredibly precise performance. Of course, this is a constantly evolving system, which I believe will enable us to adopt increasingly advanced technologies." The ISS not only allows Absolute to build its boats in a unique way but this method of construction is a factor in why its models boast such astonishing internal volume and allows the design and engineering teams to be very intelligent with the way the boats are packaged.

MODERN WORKING

It's not just the boats that are at the cutting edge, the Absolute warehouse – the pillar of its production chain – is one of the most advanced in the industry and a pinnacle of efficiency where four robotic vertical storage systems house all the materials required to build a boat, each component organised by size and frequency of use and able to be meticulously tracked both by those building the boats and the Procurement and Product Planning department. This is an area headed up by co-founder and board member Marcello Bè, who firmly believes that boat innovation goes hand in hand with business innovation. He says: "At Absolute we think that a good product can only be built when technology, machinery and people continue to evolve, keeping up with the times. Absolute continues to invest in all of these areas every day and will continue to do so to make sure our products are always at the forefront of our industry."

As a financially independent business, which only uses its own equity, Absolute is in the fortunate position of being able to reinvest its double digit turnover increase and significant profits back into the company. With a group of shareholders who are directly involved in the business and each take ownership of a certain area within it, there is excellent communication from the top down so decisions are shared and can be made quickly.

Absolute refers to its 250-strong workforce as a family and in some cases that is quite literally the case. Patrizia Gobbi, daughter of Angelo and one of two women on the current board, joined Absolute in 2005 having been heavily involved in her father's business for the ten years prior and

is now General Manager. For her, it is Absolute's strengths as both a local and a global business that make it such a fascinating and successful enterprise. "Absolute's unique values, which set it apart from other shipyards, are reflected even in the choice of the brand's name," she explains. "Absolute is a 'global' word that is pronounced in the same way and has the same meaning in many languages. Our global focus is reflected in our attention to each geographical area and the needs of a varied clientele, to make sure we design products that always meet their needs.

"At the same time Absolute is a strongly local business," she explains. "The company has grown in Piacenza and capitalises on local human resources, training young talent and establishing long-lasting relationships.

"The average age of the Absolute team is lower than in other companies; the presence of enthusiastic and determined young people strongly contributes to the company's dynamic development and efficiency."

CUSTOMER FIRST

The family ethos extends to Absolute's global network of dealers, whose job it is to care for customers and their boats long after they have left the factory, as board member and shareholder Cesare Mastroianni, the man responsible for Sales and Promotion, explains: "Our dealers must take care of their entire downstream supply chain and be able to provide support and advice to our end customers, which is why they are carefully selected. Our dealers provide an all-inclusive service, especially for non-local customers, which includes mooring, guarding, captains, winter storage, spring preparation, maintenance and a real concierge service.

"Customers should fall in love with the boat and then experience careful and effective local support. An excellent product that is well designed, well-built and with good customer service."

This dedication to excellence from every corner of the organisation is what sets it apart. This is a modern, forward-thinking shipyard where yachts are built for those who love to go to sea by those who love to go to sea.