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The Eastern Mediterranean has a lot to offer yachts seeking a refit

Words: Frances and Michael Howorth



**G**eographically, the Eastern Mediterranean commonly refers to the group of countries that include Cyprus, Greece and Turkey. Steeped in history, these each offer a fascinating insight into different cultures, past and present. Full of contrasts, the area encompasses refitting shipyards just outside the 3,000 year old city of Istanbul and, in the country's south, Antalya. It also includes Greece and specifically its port of Piraeus, which is probably still justified in calling itself the refit port of the world even if this claim to fame is supported by the huge volume of commercial vessels that flock to the shipyards that surround it. Those same shipyards do however, guarantee a workforce that knows a watertight door from a tank top. Then there is Cyprus, a still politically divided nation that offers a wealth of cruising opportunities that once the refit is completed, have a seductive air about them.

Save for Greece and the southern part of Cyprus the area remains gloriously free from VAT and whilst that can make importing of ships spares from mainland Europe, more difficult the pros often outweigh the cons of doing so. Having determined

the Eastern Mediterranean has a lot to offer yachts seeking refit there only remains the choice of country and shipyard to decide upon. This brief snapshot examines just some of the many possibilities.

## Turkey

### TUZLA

Mehmet Karabeyoglu a director at Proteksan Turquoise reports a flurry of yachts refitted over recent months including: the 50 metre yachts Lady K and Mosaïque along with the 44 metre Silver Dream. Larger yachts the likes of the 60 metre Cloud 9 and the 72.6 metre Vicky have also been accommodated in the shipyard in Turkey's yacht building area of Tuzla.

Karabeyoglu believes there are great opportunities for refitting in Turkey. "It's simply because of the availability of high quality hard working labour force who we can employ at realistic prices." He added, "However, Proteksan Turquoise is perhaps one of the very few yards here that can handle the bigger super yachts." Karabeyoglu is however cautious when it comes to



predicting the future. He told us, "We see that there will be no significant improvement in the next 12 months; maybe even a further decline due to European Union economic problems and the sanctions against Russian businessmen." Proteksan Turquoise has a proven ability to build high standard yachts. Talisman C, Vicky and Ileria have been delivered recently. Refits have in recent times become important to the builder with its ability to dock 5 yachts and with its own floating dock. Heated sheds can accommodate yachts up to 75 metres for painting.

With Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen International Airport, just 15 minutes away from the shipyard, offering direct flights to many major European cities logistics are easily facilitated. Then of course, there is the lure of, Istanbul an exciting playground for yacht crew to enjoy when they are off duty.

## BODRUM

With 25 years combined experience in the marine and charter industry in both Australia and Turkey, Bodrum Yacht Services brings a depth of local knowledge, qualified tradespeople and

local resources to ensure that yachts refitting with them receive the best services at the lowest prices. Owners Dave Stanley and Dina Street bring together combined knowledge and experiences that help smooth the way for yachts choosing to refit in the port. They told us the refit industry in Turkey and especially here in Bodrum is growing stronger year on year. Competitive pricing for lifting, launching and storage along with cheaper labour rates are the principle reasons for coming here. In Bodrum we work with Aganlar, a yard equipped with the latest travel lifts and yard trailers.

Elsewhere in Bodrum the Barke Shipyard, part of the Begum Yachting Group, is located just 30 minutes away from Bodrum International Airport. The Shipyard was established in 2005 and is a modern and dynamic organization, striving to achieve the optimum quality and the highest level of service for their clients. As demand for comprehensive refit centres in the area increases, the shipyard is opening another service facility in Didim at D-Manin Marina, North of Bodrum, aimed at attracting even larger yachts.

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### ANTALYA

Further south, the Antalya Tax Free Zone offers financial advantages to shipyards working inside it and to the yachts refitting there. Free Zones are defined as special sites within the country but deemed to be outside of the customs territory. Inside the zones, regulations related to foreign trade and other financial and economic areas are not applicable making them a more convenient business climate to work in. The area around Antalya offers an exceptionally pleasant environment: the 630km shoreline of the province is liberally scattered with ancient cities, harbours, memorial tombs and beaches, secluded coves and lush forests, many of which are easily accessible from the city. An added bonus for crew refitting over winter is the mild weather on the coast that makes swimming still possible whilst skiing in the mountains is an easy day trip.

Without a doubt, the largest and most significant of all superyacht companies within the Zone is Sunrise Yachts. Capable of building up to nine 70 metre yachts at any one time, the company has made it a practise to refit yachts along side the new build projects. The most recent refit was of O'Khalia, the gold coloured 48 metre Palmer Johnson. Purchased by serial yacht owner John Staluppi, who loves naming his yachts after James Bond film titles, she has been renamed Skyfall 2. The massive refit, during which one of her three engines was removed was completed on time and inside the budget. The scope of the refit, so grand that at times it resembled a rebuild, also saw the yacht loose her signature gold covering replaced by grey awlgrip coating inside the yard's purpose built climate controlled paint shed. In recent times the yard has also refitted the 47m Big Mak, the 41m Rob Roy, the 41m Cloud Nine along with two sub 30 metre yachts whose names are Unlimited BB and Ars Vivendi.

Arkin Pruva, builders of the Rob Humphrey's designed Tempus Class is putting spare yard capacity to good use refitting and in some cases rebuilding yachts. Currently inside one shed, they have a 24 metre motor yacht, and in another a 43 metre catamaran hulled motor yachts both undergoing total rebuilds. Alia Yachts another shipyard known for the construction of fine sailing yachts have a skilled and experienced workforce offering a comprehensive range of refitting services from equipment and engine modification or system and security upgrading, to decoration or restyling. Refit projects vary from a simple partial paint to full scale interior and exterior modification, to respond to clients' changing needs and preferences.

Theirs and the facilities in Antalya other shipyards provide a lively and pleasant working and off duty environment for crew members. An internationally popular holiday destination in southern Turkey, Antalya offers endless choices of accommodation and dining as well as direct flights to most major European cities.

### Greece

When it comes to refitting superyachts, Greece is gifted geographically being centred around one of the world's most favoured cruising destinations. It has thousands of islands, good weather and consequently offers very good choice for those seeking to vacation on board yachts.

Flisvos Marina near Athens is part of the Spanopoulos Group. Betty Gkika of the company's Yachting Department is seeing refit business picking up after what she delicately describes as, "A



### Bodrum Yacht Services

With 25 years combined experience in the marine and charter industry in both Australia and Turkey, Bodrum Yacht Services brings a vast depth of local knowledge, qualified trades people and local resources to ensure that their clients receive the best services at the most competitive prices. Dave Stanley brings many years of wooden boat building, mechanical and marine painting experience to Bodrum Yacht Services. Dina Street brings her technical background and fluency in languages as well as many years experience in the service, charter and boat building industry in Bodrum. They have access to a wide array of very talented workers, crew and technical staff for a diversity of projects, including project management, new gulet construction, yacht refits and technical repairs. For more details Tel: +90 252 316 2434 or visit [www.bodrumyachtservices.com](http://www.bodrumyachtservices.com)



### Spanopoulos Shipyard

After years of experience in the yacht business Spanopoulos Shipyard, has presently widen its horizons with the opening of a new extra modern site in Perama. The new shipyard consists of 16500m<sup>2</sup> capable of accommodating more than 30 yachts from 25m up to 70m and 2500m<sup>2</sup> housing offices, workshops, storage areas, library, gym, café, roof garden as well as apartments for crew and visitors. Spanopoulos Shipyard uses a modern travel lift of 820 tons lifting capacity and a 64,5m long floating dock, capable of docking vessels up to 4000tons. All kinds of services are provided in house under high standards classifications and a high liability insurance. The company's vision is no other than to hold the leading position in the field of ship and yacht repairs, refits and new buildings not only in Greece but also internationally. For more details Tel: +30 210 4095000 or visit [www.spanopoulos-group.com](http://www.spanopoulos-group.com)

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two or three year period of stability and conservatism brought about of the general economic crisis." Located 6 km from the centre of the city centre that uniquely combines ancient with modern, Flisvos Marina provides access to many cultural and entertainment attractions available in the rejuvenated Olympic city. The newly constructed Athens ring road and the extensive and modern public transportation system allow easy and convenient access to the Archaeological Museum as well as excursions to the Acropolis, historical sites, monuments and museums.

Gkika believes that much of the reason for increased activity lies in the price of second hand tonnage, which she says, "Have become more reasonable so now the choice of a refit instead a new building seems to be more attractive. From our point of view," she adds, "Things seem optimistic for the next years in this sector in general." Looking to the future she says, "We are expecting a large increase in the number of yachts this year. There is a significant flow of yachts coming from the Western Mediterranean to the Eastern side. We have a lot of requests for major works and long term stay from foreign owners and there is also a big interest in purchase for resale. These are signs that reveal an awakening of the yachting market and as a consequence the development in all the yachting business."

The Spanopoulos Shipyard, has expanded with the opening of a new extra modern site in Perama. The shipyard consists of 16500m<sup>2</sup> capable of accommodating more than 30 yachts from 25m up to 70m and 2500m<sup>2</sup>. Penelope Monastirioutou says, "The Spanopoulos Shipyard yard, has large lifting capacity up to 4000 tons and can practically satisfy almost all kinds of superyachts at very reasonable prices. Apart from that we are the only shipyard which can provide in house all kinds of services from technical to yacht renovation and transformation, interior design, interior and exterior painting, engineering, carpentry and joinery, metal works, welding and fabrication, GRP and fibreglass repairs, structural changes & extensions, everything. Especially now in our new site we haven't only focused on the quality of the technical support but we have invested on the respect for the crew and its pleasant stay in our shipyard by offering extra facilities. The shipyard has also storage areas, library, meeting rooms, gym, café, roof garden as well as apartments for crew and visitors."

### Cyprus

In Northern Cyprus, the shipyard at Karpaz Gate Marina has expanded its refit capabilities. Featuring an 18,000 square metre dry dock and 300-ton capacity travel hoist and service pedestals, the boatyard is currently carrying out major projects and renewal work for superyachts, as well as refit, repairs and season preparation service projects.

A comprehensive selection of heavy duty tools and equipment are available in the boatyard, including hydraulic work platforms, welding equipment, cutting equipment, high capacity compressors and mobile cranes. Experienced and capable staff are on site to conduct and execute any scope of project, while the duty-free status at the marina provides extra benefits for clients with savings on spare parts, fuel, technical service and supplies.

Marina Technical Manager Efe Karahan Sahin told us: "We have been able to take on many more big projects this year, including a major steel plates renewal project for a Benetti motor yacht

which involved multiple tasks such as welding and electric works, carpentry and paint applications. We also worked on another major repair on a Moonen motor yacht which again involved steel plates renewal, along with interior redesign works. In addition, we continue to provide seasonal services to numerous clients. "We have comprehensive engineering and boat maintenance services, including our travel lift which is capable of lifting vessels up to 45 metres and with a beam of up to 10 metres, including catamarans. Duty-free Euro Diesel and gasoline is also available."

Berthing packages at the marina for this year include free dry dock services for specific maintenance and repair work, including lift and launch and anti-fouling. Regular technical work on offer at the boatyard also includes hull cleaning and sanding, changing anodes, cleaning of shafts and anodes, plus the application of primer.

Harbour Master Deniz Akaltan added: "The set-up we have is unmatched in the area and we are confident we can cater for a huge range of vessels, working closely with owners to carry out the specific work needed on their boats. He added, "The dry dock area has been very sympathetically built, with a lot of consideration given to keeping it separate from the rest of the marina to maintain the atmosphere of the promenade and beach club area."

With owners seeking to benefit from tax free advantages by staying out of the Euro Zone and with yacht crews being wooed by the offer of beach clubs and night life in destinations frequented by tourists, it seems the Eastern Mediterranean has a lot to offer the superyacht seeking refit work.



### Proteksan Turquoise

Located conveniently in Istanbul, Proteksan Turquoise Yachts Inc. offers excellent refit opportunities having the ability to produce Northern European mega yachts. The shipyard has state of the art heated facilities and excellent engineering knowledge for finding solutions and dealing with class issues. Deep water dockage in front of the shipyard can handle up to 90 meter yachts afloat and 75 meters on dry. The shipyard has its own floating dock which facilitates quick lifting and launching. The shipyard is close to Tuzla in a clean environment but at the same time having access to all the outside contractor and vendor services. Istanbul is a lively town where the crew can enjoy all the attractions, art and history. For more details Tel: +90 216 474 25 90 or visit [www.proteksan-turquoise.com](http://www.proteksan-turquoise.com)