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# the crew

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## REPORT





**There are courses in navigation, safety and operations but few deck crew receive formal training on the maintenance aspects of their job. Pinmar Yacht Painting Systems has developed a new three-day course to help deck crew paint like the professionals and keep the exterior looking as fresh as the day the hull hit the water. Esther Barney investigates.**

**T**here are courses aplenty for the operation of a superyacht – over the years numerous academic hurdles have been created for those aspiring to a few more stripes on their epaulettes. The skills for maintaining a vessel, however, are passed on by word of mouth from experienced senior crew. This is by no means a bad system; trial and error over the generations of crew will have no doubt honed the techniques superbly, and the courses were simply not available.

This has all changed with a new paint training course from Palma-based Pinmar Yacht Painting Systems, designed primarily for superyacht crew who are responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of the vessel's exterior. None of those on the first course had attended anything similar before, most likely because there was nothing available. With a full paint job of a 50-m superyacht costing several hundred thousand euros, the crew could save a fortune for the owner and reduce the amount of yard time required by maintaining the paintwork on a regular basis.

The first three-day Pinmar Paint Training Course was attended by crew of all levels, from deckhand to captain, each giving positive feedback. Although the course is based around the Awlgrip paint brand, this was not considered to detract from the course by the majority of participants, who confirmed that the techniques learned are relevant across a number of paint brands, with the basic concepts universally applicable. Captain Brian Thomas of 31.6-m MY *Lola D* commented: "Although the content was based around the Awlgrip product the lecturers answered questions regarding other paint products. [It was]

unbiased and to the point." Instructors are from Awlgrip, Yacht CSI and experienced applicators from Pinmar.

Over the three days the course content progresses from theoretically based topics to more practical elements, including spray painting of a one square metre panel with topcoat. Subjects covered in the classroom include:

- Mixing and usage of the various products available (including materials and tools required; mixing ratios; induction times; thinners and accelerators; temperature and humidity conditions and contamination).
- Maintenance for old and new topcoats (including corrosion, loss of gloss through UV deterioration, salt, fading and wear and tear; and tips for maintaining polyurethane and acrylic topcoats; products and methods for cleaning and maintaining old and new paint).
- Paint and materials onboard (including the breakdown of an adequate repair kit and rotating the paint kept onboard).
- An introduction to the role of a paint surveyor (including roles during new build and refit projects and methods used by the surveyor).
- Health and safety when using paint products (including safety equipment required and chemical content of paint products – this element of the course is vital, as the inappropriate use of harsh paints can cause serious health effects).
- Health and safety when storing materials onboard (including fire prevention and control).
- Environmental control when using paint products (including chemical content of products; dust control; solvents; extraction and filtration).

Practical elements of the course address patch repairing of damaged coatings with attendee participation and how to quickly repair between or during charters, as well as a chance to spray a topcoat onto a panel. The techniques teach how to create a more professional finish on small paint jobs, thus eliminating the need to bring on professional painters or crew to do a less-than-professional job. According to Duncan Macnie, first mate on 49.8-m SY *Phryne*, the representative from Pinmar "went out of his way to give practical advice and correct techniques on the go". These practical elements are very popular and feedback from the crews has suggested there be more included; Pinmar has taken this into account for future courses and will be adapting the syllabus. On completion of the course attendees receive a Pinmar Paint Academy certificate and the best applicator of the week is awarded a prize.

Although Pinmar states that no prior experience is required, one attendee commented that some basic background knowledge on paint is useful. The emphasis, for Bosun Adam Butterfield of MY *Anna*, was on learning the correct way of going about painting jobs, rather than just carrying on as always.

The participants have already started using the techniques they learned on the course and passing on the knowledge to their fellow crewmembers: "We grinded a patch on the foredeck to steel and are in the process of repairing it 'by the book'," commented Macnie. Butterfield used his newfound skills to repaint some doors on MY *Anna*, "instead of doing it the old slap bang way we did it the proper way," he explained. The knowledge gained on the course can also be used for planning refits and new builds, giving the crew a far more in-depth knowledge of how the yard work is carried out. "We have been doing some small paint jobs where we have used the techniques described," said Captain Thomas. "This year we have a major refit and the interior components will be painted by the crew." The SY *Phryne* captain and first mate will also be planning

and making decisions around their winter repair jobs based on the knowledge acquired over the three days.

We asked if there was anything that the attendees would have changed on the course. Dwight Hosken, mate on MY *Altana*, suggested that although the course was very well paced, emphasising the practical effectiveness of the techniques described in some of the sections would be helpful, as well as rearranging the order, so paint quality assessment falls after the practical elements. He did stress that the practical application tuition was good, however, and that the facilities were ideal. Captain Thomas stated that there were "no bad parts to the course as the total content was relative to the subject", and the facilities were all highly praised. Pinmar will be evolving the course in response to all feedback, and the second course in the spring aims to be even more successful.

Those who took the course would recommend it to crewmembers of various levels, whether a deckhand who will be physically painting themselves, or the officers and captains who need to make planning decisions on touch-up and refit work.

The course is currently free of charge, although Pinmar might add a small fee in the future to ensure sustainability. Accommodation is not included, but can be arranged by Pinmar staff. When asked, all attendees agreed that they would have paid for the course knowing its content and that they would recommend it to others.

*In the future there will be two courses a year, one in the spring and one in autumn, hosted in either Palma or Barcelona. If you are interested in attending a future course contact Eva Grauls at [eva@pinmar.com](mailto:eva@pinmar.com).*

*Image courtesy of [www.comapssdesign.biz](http://www.comapssdesign.biz)*