



In the Plush World of La Ciotat's Yacht Industry

The Oldenburger Story



The German yacht interior specialists Oldenburger officially opened their La Ciotat premises at the beginning of January. Using rare wood types, quality marble and luxury fabrics, the company fits out yachts from stem to stern according to the wealthy owners' specifications and –often eclectic- tastes. Little-known outside the industry, the name Oldenburger has come to symbolize an art of living and the ultimate in refinement among the select circle of yacht skippers.

Since January 2015, the family-owned company has a permanent office at the La Ciotat shipyard, a decision that goes back in fact to 2012, when the company was already working on the site as a sub-contractor to Composite Works.

> An Oldenburger container that caused a buzz

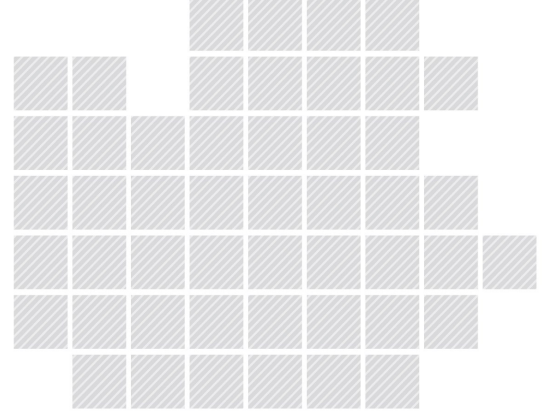
It only took a container painted in the Oldenburger livery on the dockside to create a buzz among the purchasing deciders -the yacht skippers- and significantly boost the group's local business. "We're starting off with small jobs, from €10,000 and up," explains Timo Hartmüller. At 16 years old, the young German carpenter always dreamed of working in the luxury world of yachts as a boy. A few years later, that dream has become reality. As technical supervisor, Timo is developing business on the site alongside sales manager Philippe Stubendorf.

Planes, Yachts and Retail Stores...

Founded in 1953 in Dinklage, Northern Germany, Oldenburger started out making furniture before moving into retail store (Hugo Boss...) and hotel furniture design. Its OIP subsidiary in Shanghai employs 90 persons in its workshop. In 1988, the group diversified into the luxury yacht market, applying its upmarket know-how to the Golden Odyssey, built at the Blohm & Voss shipyard. A third subsidiary works in the field of aircraft interior design. The group employs 230 staff in Germany and has an annual turnover of €50 M, of which half comes from the yacht sector.

Photo: Timo Hartmüller, Oldenburger's technical supervisor at La Ciotat, is working with Philippe Stubendorf to develop the company's business locally, both with direct clients and sub-contract work with the shipyards.





> A workshop and ten staff by 2016

“La Ciotat represents a genuine opportunity for us in the interior renovation market. The first step was to have our own offices and we eventually would like to have a workshop to be able to do everything on site. The Semidep introduced us to the Provence Promotion people with whom we are working to set up a network of suppliers among other things. Our strategy is based on setting up local partnerships. For economical reasons, we don't want to import the raw materials from Germany,” adds Hartmüller, who aims to bring staff numbers up to 10 by 2016.

> From the White Rose of Drachs to the Phocéa...

If Oldenburger is continuing its partnership with Composite Works, other nearby shipyards at Toulon and Marseille are also calling on the services of the internationally-recognized interior designer. Indeed, the company is not short of prestige references, including the interior of the spectacular Nirvana to the classic English style of the White Rose of Drachs and the warm atmosphere of the Pelorus, not forgetting the refurbishment of the famous yacht Phocéa.

The group also carried renovation work on the interior of the superb 63 meter-long Faith during its call at La Ciotat in 2012. Since then, several other yachts have spent time in the dry docks at La Ciotat, although Timo Hartmüller prefers not to divulge the identity of their owners. In this select world, the strictest confidentiality is always applied!

Forty 60+ m Yachts in 2014

The La Ciotat shipyard has met its target for 2014, handling 40 of the 450 yachts calling at the shipyard yachts being over 60 m, compared with only 25 the previous year. Since the dry-docking of the largest yachts often involves work being done by subcontractors and service providers who worked on the yachts' original construction, more and more companies are looking to set up in La Ciotat on a permanent basis.

“Provence Promotion assists them with recruiting and compliance with French legislation,” explains Jean-Philippe Mignard, director of the Semidep, which manages the shipyard on behalf of the General Council, Regional Council, Marseille Urban Community and the City of La Ciotat.

To find out more

- [Oldenburger website](#)

