

# SAARE

on the path to building the world's most desirable yachts

Saaremaa, the largest island in tiny Estonia, is home to the builders of some of the most desirable sailing yachts in the world. Saare Yachts got its beginnings in 1992 as a Swedish-Estonian joint venture and has quickly grown from doing subcontracting for Finnish boatbuilders to a successful yacht manufacturer revered for its high quality standards.

**Although the company's roots lie in building wooden boats, Saare Yachts made the bold move from subcontracting to launching the SAARE brand for manufacturing and selling their own yachts in 2007.** "It was a very courageous decision to move towards conquering foreign markets under our own brand, but a rightful one," remembers Saare Yachts' CEO Peeter Säask. "As patriots of our home island we opted for the brand name SAARE, because it sounds neutral in foreign languages while maintaining an exotic appeal."

## SEAFARERS TURNED BOATBUILDERS

Estonia has a long history as a sea-faring nation, but not as a ship-building country. "Our yacht building DNA is modelled after our Finnish partners, because most of our know-how on yacht building actually originates from our one-time partnership with Finnish boatbuilders Finngulf. This cooperation inspired our first 41-foot sailboat, which has remained in production since 2008," explains Säask.

**The first cruiser was very well received, as specialist publications placed the newcomer alongside the strongest yacht brands in international competition.** Fore-sensing the great potential of SAARE yachts, a major German yacht dealer acquired the controlling stake in the company, thus significantly improving the company's access to the lucrative German market.

Although Saare Yachts aren't a game-changing player in the global yacht industry, the **German market appreciates their production highly.** The buyers value the durable composite materials used in yacht-building, the quality

of handwork and the polished finishing touches on the yacht. "Our yachts are custom-built for each customer individually with meticulous consideration shown for the client's every whim and desire," stresses Säask.

## DEDICATION PRODUCES QUALITY

Saare Yachts define success as being able to create a brand valued for its dedication to quality. The yachts are hand-built in Saaremaa in partnership with other local companies. **"We only subcontract stainless steel components and soft furniture, but even these materials are supplied to us by our partners in nearby villages."** All necessary technical equipment and electronics are also installed on-site and the client is delivered a fully functional yacht. "Sometimes our customers insist on having the yacht delivered by land on a trailer, but more often they actually travel to Saaremaa for delivery and embark on a longer sea journey from here."

Peeter Säask explains that **a proper sailboat is a very complex and expensive product, where all systems need to function seamlessly and without any problems from day one.** "You can spend months fine-tuning a house, but a yacht needs to be 100 per cent equipped and ready for sailing from the moment of delivery," Säask explains the company's focus on safety.

## SATISFIED CUSTOMERS FROM ALL OVER EUROPE

Germany has become the main market for SAARE yachts, with 5-6 yachts launched every year. But their customer base also extends to the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Finland, Austria, Spain and elsewhere. Most of the sales action is handled by regional dealers, **but the company has vowed to be present at all major boat fairs in Europe,** without even considering giving the Düsseldorf boat fair a miss.

"Our clients are very demanding consumers, their choice in exclusive cars alone is testament to their heightened demands and they expect similar, if not higher quality from their yachts as well. **Customer satisfaction and feedback are the driving forces behind our sales strategy.** The best example of this is the recent delivery



of our largest 46-foot vessel, which we handed over to the client with a blank sheet of paper where we asked him to write down all his comments and remarks. He returned the piece of paper at the end of the navigation season and it was still blank - he simply couldn't list a single fault with our yacht," smiles Säask.

### ESTONIA – LAND OF THE COMMITTED

Estonia's advantage in Säask's opinion is the dedication and commitment of its people, resulting in the delivery of world-class quality. "We started essentially from scratch as a ship-building nation in the 90s, which in some ways has worked out in our favour - there was nothing negative to associate with us. On the other hand there was absolutely nothing to associate with us in the first place, so we really had a lot of trust-building to do and we've achieved this quite remarkably." **As a small nation Estonia isn't keen on building mass-production facilities, but the level and quality of craftsmanship here is beyond reproach.**

While it wasn't easy to win over the confidence of the first customers, today Estonia ranks as a considerable player in the yacht-building industry. In fact, Saaremaa hosts its own small-vessel building cluster, providing bread and butter to several boat-builders and other companies providing ancillary services. Composite Plus stands out as one example of a success story, manufacturing moulds for Germany's largest yacht builder Hanse. Säask stresses that **international partners greatly value the honest and transparent communication of Estonian businesses and the fact that whenever something is promised, it's always delivered.**

### FUTURE GOALS – QUALITY OVER QUICK GROWTH

Saare Yachts has a positive outlook on the future. "We continue investing in product development and staying true to our mission statement of becoming one of the most desirable yacht brands for discerning customers. Growing quickly isn't our focus, we're more intent on building up a reputation among the potential customers who are willing to dish out 400 to 700 thousand euros on a yacht - we know that such high net-worth individuals are very careful with their selection process and sooner or later end up looking at SAARE yachts," concludes Säask.

