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# MARINE INDUSTRY

SPECIAL SECTION



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## MARINE INDUSTRY

# FULL STEAM AHEAD

## Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show eschews virtual route

BY MATTHEW ARROJAS  
marrojas@bizjournals.com

**M**arine Industries Association of South Florida CEO and President Phil Purcell compared the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show to Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom when making the decision to move forward with a live show.

The Magic Kingdom has hosted 10,000 guests across its 107-acre campus each day since it reopened in July. The boat show is expected to draw smaller crowds over 90 acres.

"To not have an event like [ours] when other counties are hosting 10,000 people a day would be the worst message we could send to people nationally and across the globe," Purcell said.

The five-day Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show (FLIBS) will kick off Oct. 28. It's the first live boat show in South Florida since the Miami International Boat Show in February. The Palm Beach Boat show, which took place in May, went virtual this year as the Covid-19 pandemic spread through the region.

The boat show will go on, despite other major events – such as eMerge Americas and Art Basel in Miami Beach, and the Winterfest Boat Parade in Fort Lauderdale – canceling their 2020 editions.

"In putting on the boat show, we can show that we were able to effectively host an event that really bolstered the local economy," Purcell said. "All our focus should be on how to effectively allow people to do business again."

To make it happen, the boat show will look different from past years.

### PRECAUTIONS IN PLACE

Informa, which produces the boat show for MIASE, as well as the Miami Yacht Show and Palm Beach International Boat Show, announced enhanced safety protocols:

- There will be 14 entrances in an effort

to disperse crowds and avoid congregation.

- The show's floating docks have been widened to 30 feet to allow for social distancing.

- Masks are required for all visitors and workers.

- Visitors are encouraged to purchase tickets online in advance so they can be scanned from mobile devices.

- Visitors will have their temperatures checked at all show venue entrances. Those registering a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will not be allowed to enter.

- Hygiene stations will be installed throughout the show for guests to disinfect their hands regularly. Staff will disinfect high touch points each hour.

Andrew Doole, president of U.S. boat shows for Informa, said the size of the Fort Lauderdale show is key to their ability to host the event.

With 90 acres of space and fewer anticipated attendees than in previous years, the show will be able to spread out crowds so no exhibits are overwhelmed.

About 80% of the show takes place outdoors, which hampers the coronavirus's ability to spread, as droplet particles disperse more quickly outside than they do inside.

Doole said the show's food concession areas will not have self-service buffets, as in previous years. Instead, guests will be able to purchase prepackaged meals at the show.

"We're looking into how we can make the space as safe as possible," he said. "I think everybody in the town is very much looking forward to having an event of this size and some economic activity."

Based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines on events and gatherings, FLIBS could be considered a "higher-risk" event. This means there may be a higher chance of infection due to the amount of people visiting from outside of the region and the size of the show, even if participants remain 6 feet apart.



Kiss Debolt, of Sun Kissed Boat Detailing in Pompano Beach, details boats at the Nor-

### LESSONS LEARNED

The Palm Beach International Boat Show was slated to take place in downtown West Palm Beach in March, but was among the first South Florida events to be canceled due to the pandemic.

Doole said Informa's team created online exhibits for the show's vendors, and the boat show was the company's first virtual U.S. show. The virtual format launched May 14.

"We had more visitors than anticipated, double the expectation for our first day," he said. "Still, there's no substitute

for the real show."

While some vendors, such as Fort Lauderdale-based Denison Yacht Sales, were able to generate sales through the virtual show, results varied for others.

Mike Carlson, co-owner of Fort Lauderdale-based 26 North Yachts, said the virtual event didn't impart any benefit the company's own website didn't already provide.

"From my perspective, ultimately in boating and yachting, being able to get on the boat in the sales process is hugely important because it's such a big life-



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Tech display in preparation for the 2019 Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show.

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style choice," he said. "It's so important to meet someone in person and develop the relationship for any boat sale."

Doole said he was happy with what his team was able to accomplish with the virtual show, but doesn't think it's the future for yacht sales. He said more boat shows will likely have an online component in the future, but the focus will remain on in-person events.

**MOVING FORWARD**

The region's tourism and hospitality industry struggled throughout the pan-

*"I think everybody in the town is very much looking forward to having an event of this size and some economic activity."*

**ANDREW DOOLE,**  
Informa

demic as hotels reported historically low occupancy and restaurants operated at reduced capacity.

MIASF's Purcell said he hopes FLIBS can provide a jump start for the region's economy.

"We're looking at FLIBS not just as a marine industry event, but something that benefits the entire state," he said.

The show is consistently a massive economic driver for the region.

According to an economic impact study released by Informa and MIAF, last year's show generated \$1.3 billion,

up more than \$800 million since 2015. The 2019 show attracted 100,000 visitors, with about 10% coming from outside of the U.S.

Those numbers will likely be muted this year due to the pandemic, but Purcell still has high expectations for the show. He declined to give an estimate as to how many people he expects to attend the show.

Members of the Broward County Commission unanimously showed support for the show during its Sept. 10 meeting.

"If you name it, this show touches it," Commissioner Lamar Fisher said. "I believe the show is needed now more than ever."

Representatives from some of the businesses the show positively impacts also voiced support.

"We can't let Fort Lauderdale be driven by [Covid-19]," Bahia Mar Fort Lauderdale Beach General Manager Lisa Namour said. "We do need to figure out a better way to coexist."

**HESITANT VENDORS**

26 North Yachts' Carlson said he will decide whether to participate in FLIBS at the last minute.

He said he's committed to being a vendor at the show, but there is a chance he may pull out before Oct. 28. The only reason he said "yes" is because he is based in Fort Lauderdale.

Informa's Doole said "the vast majority" of last year's exhibitors will attend this year's show, but most international vendors have chosen not to attend due to travel restrictions.

Carlson said the first concern is the safety of his employees.

He said that even with safety guidelines in place, the risk is not erased entirely. Carlson also said he's concerned there won't be enough inventory to warrant exhibiting at the show.

The yachts 26 North Yachts shows at FLIBS all have private owners who are looking to sell their vessels.

"Even if the boat is listed for sale, most sellers don't want 100 people passing through their boat under these circumstances," Carlson said. "Many of them are still using the boat until it's sold, so they don't want it potentially infected."

He said that more sellers have opted out of the boat show than have opted in, meaning a shortage of vessels to display is a real possibility. Coupled with the fact that there will be a lower attendance, he's unsure if FLIBS is worth the price of exhibition this year.

"It's a double-edged sword because [boat] sales are so strong, and that's a big reason why you'd want to [sell at] a boat show," he said. "I still have to evaluate the risk."

## MARINE INDUSTRY

# FLOATING IN STYLE

## Interior designers enhance yachts

BY BRIAN BANDELL  
bbandell@bizjournals.com

**S**ize, horsepower and performance on the water are often key criteria for boat buyers about to make a purchase, but interior design has become a make-or-break factor in many deals.

As yachts have grown larger, there's more room for sophisticated interiors that mimic homes, hotels or even bars. It's not as simple as relocating furnishings from the home to the yacht. Only certain materials can handle the rigors of life at sea, and furniture must be anchored or weighted so it doesn't tip over.

Interior design of boats has become especially important during the Covid-19 pandemic, as the vessels have become a popular and safe way for families to get out of the house. According to online boating marketplace Boat Trader, there has been a 75% increase in women searching for boats so far in 2020.

Often, a husband and wife evaluate the boat as a team, with the husband looking at the engine and mechanical systems, while the wife considers the interior design, said Karen Lynn Poulos, founder of Fort Lauderdale-based Karen Lynn Interior Design. She's been in the business for 20 years, and 98% of her work is on yachts.

Right now, a lot of buyers have placed their yachts on the market because of the recession, but they haven't updated the interior in years, she said.

"A lot of buyers aren't visual. They can't see past the sofa from 1995 and the heavy curtains," Poulos said. "The trend in yacht design now is really modern and clean, more of a soft contemporary look."

Sellers usually don't completely renovate yacht interiors prior to a sale because it's hard to guess exactly what a future buyer's taste will be, Poulos said. It's not like house flipping, where you can renovate and easily resell for a profit.

It's important to bring in an interior designer to consult with prospective buyers and tell them what can be done with the space. They can make a book of renderings to help sell the boat, and potentially win a contract with the buyer.

Interior design for a yacht is more challenging than for a home because the shape of the hull changes the size of rooms and it's a moving vessel, said Fort Lauderdale interior designer Marty Lowe, who has worked in both areas. She likes to add light to boat interiors to brighten them up. If creating a



DK PHOTOGRAPHY 2004-2019

A yacht salon by Karen Lynn Interior Design.



DK PHOTOGRAPHY 2004-2019

A yacht kitchen and dining area by Karen Lynn Interior Design.



BILLY BLACK

A yacht bedroom by Karen Lynn Interior Design.

window above the waterline isn't possible, creating a skylight is a good idea.

"A yacht is different from any home our clients have," Lowe said. "I want them to be comfortable and relaxed. I don't want anything in there so precious that it takes away from the casualness of the yachting experience."

There's been an increase in retrofit work recently, as more people buy used boats, Lowe said. Much of the work for U.S.-based yachts is performed at boat yards in South Florida, she added.

For new yachts, most 60- to 80-foot models have standard interiors with small upgrades available, Poulos said. Larger

yachts typically have interiors customized for the buyer, and no two are the same. She works with the buyer and manufacturer to design the interior while the yacht is being built.

### BIG BUSINESS

Most buyers are attracted to Heesen Yachts because of the quality of the mechanical and electrical systems, but the interior really sells the boat, said Thom Conboy, the Dutch yacht builder's director of sales in Fort Lauderdale.

The old style of interior design was a "men's club," but new designs have interiors that are nicer than those in most homes, Conboy said. With yachts ranging from 121 to 265 feet, Heesen offers custom interiors during the building process.

For a typical \$40 million yacht, about \$12 million to \$15 million of the cost will be for interiors and furnishings, Conboy said.

"What people want is uniqueness," he said.

### POPULAR FEATURES

Since more families are enjoying boats, owners want more areas for seating and entertaining guests, Poulos said. Making them stain resistant is important for families with kids. Instead of formal tables and chairs, popular features now include family room-type settings, a bar/entertainment area, a salon and sectionals. Often, furniture can be moved and stored so one space can serve many purposes, she said.

The bedrooms often have hotel-style linens, instead of heavy fabrics, Poulos said.

"They want people to feel they can kick their feet up," she said. "It's gone to a floating hotel sort of vibe."

Another popular feature for larger yachts is exterior beach clubs. A garage-like opening creates an area for sunbathing, playing music, grilling and water sports, Poulos said. Some yachts have flip-down balconies or sky lounges with a bar on the second level. Dining on the deck or fly bridge has also become more popular, but requires special furniture that won't tip over and is resistant to the elements.

Lowe has worked on saunas, steam rooms, a movie projector and a 75-inch TV that comes out of the ceiling.

"When you are designing one of these things, it's similar to designing a private boutique hotel that's floating on the water," Poulos said. "There is nothing you can go into the store and buy off the shelf."



# The Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show Splashes Down Later This Month

*The five-day show will take place from October 28th – November 1st*

In its 61-year history, the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show (FLIBS) has never been cancelled, thanks to lasting support from the local community and despite various threats from unexpected occurrences like hurricanes and economic downturns. The coronavirus pandemic this year offered some unique and extraordinary challenges that required a concentrated effort by the Marine Industries Association of South Florida (MIASF) – owners of the boat show, Informa Markets – producers of the boat show, the broader business community, City of Fort Lauderdale officials, and Broward County officials to agree on a comprehensive plan to host the show and protect the public.

As the producer of FLIBS and approximately 500 other tradeshow around the globe, Informa Markets has access to the latest information on how to ensure the safety of FLIBS participants, and its leaders have developed and implemented the comprehensive *AllSecure* standards designed to prioritize the health and safety of attendees, exhibitors, crew members, and staff.

Andrew Doole, President of Informa U.S. Boat Shows, said, "We have worked diligently to develop a plan so that every person who attends the show can do so with confidence. We are grateful for the support of our elected officials, and our community."

The multi-site event encompasses nearly 90 acres with more than 80% of the show taking place outdoors. In comparison, Universal Studios (108 acres) and Disney's Magic Kingdom (107 acres) have been open and safely receiving about 20,000 daily guests since June and July, respectively, using temperature screenings, heightened sanitation, rules around consuming food and beverage, and face mask requirements for everyone in the parks.

In 2019, FLIBS generated an economic impact of \$1.3 billion to the state of Florida and more than 8,000 full-time jobs were associated with the show. As the largest in-water boat show in the world, it is a major economic driver for not only the marine industry, but also the hospitality and tourism industries and the thousands of lateral jobs that are positively impacted through its production.

MIASF CEO/president, Phil Purcell, said, "This year, FLIBS is an opportunity to jumpstart the local and state economy through its historic direct sales of \$715 million a year, as well as generating hotel stays, transportation, dining, and recreation, always benefitting land-



Aerial view of the 60th annual Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, 2019.

based businesses as much as marine businesses. As respected leaders in our community, it was important for the marine industry to demonstrate its resiliency and lead by example in showing Fort Lauderdale, Broward County, and the state of Florida that it can operate an event safely, securely, and in compliance with new guidelines and protocols."

Attendees of FLIBS can expect a contactless ticketing system that allows for tickets to be purchased online and scanned from a mobile device at any one of the multiple new entrances that are also equipped with thermal imaging systems for mass temperature checks so that anyone with a body temperature of 100.4 or higher can be detected and prevented from entering the show. Face coverings will be required for everyone on any of the FLIBS' sites at all times, except when dining at designated cafés. High velocity air purification systems with HEPA filters will recycle the air in tents every hour. Main docks have been widened up to 30 feet with directional arrows to maintain the flow of pedestrians and allow for social/physical distancing. Recommended signage from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) will be posted throughout the show and in high traffic areas. Customer lines will be spaced out with visual markers every six feet, including at entrances, restrooms, and food and beverage areas. Hygiene sanitization stations will be installed

throughout and safety ambassadors will assist visitors and exhibitors with compliance.

With these new *AllSecure* standards in place, FLIBS will follow the GBAC (Global Biorisk Advisory Council) standards for enhanced cleaning, including undergoing deep cleaning with disinfection each hour on all high touch points during show operating hours and after each day's events.

To help visitors, exhibitors, vendors, and crew understand the major health and

safety changes expected at this year's Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, Purcell and Doole said they are illustrating the new measures through a series of informative videos, like Know Before You Go and Getting Back to Business Safely. They both said they are grateful to the many industry leaders, exhibitors, and long-time attendees of the show who are enthusiastic and supportive of the decision to produce FLIBS and create a defining moment that turns the tide toward safely getting back to business.



For the past two years, NBC Sports Network has aired a post-FLIBS one-hour special, offering

a behind the scenes insider's view of the show. This year, the NBCSN team will broadcast the one-hour special on the final day of the show, November 1st at 4:30 p.m., entertaining audiences around the globe through its viewership of 90 million households. The broadcast will showcase not just FLIBS, but also highlight the diversity of Broward County's population and vibrant lifestyle, including its beautiful beaches, exquisite dining, luxury hotels, both boutique and large retail shopping, and access to world-famous attractions, like Everglades National Park and the 3rd largest coral reef in the world.

## MARINE INDUSTRY

# WORKING FROM THE SEA PRESENTS CHALLENGES

BY MATTHEW ARROJAS  
marrojas@bizjournals.com

**W**hile many Americans spent the past seven months working from home, some have elected for a different type of remote workplace: a boat.

The uptick in South Floridians interested in working from the sea has generated new sales, said Bob Denison, president of Fort Lauderdale-based Denison Yachting.

"Demand is attached to people looking to spend time – and by time, I mean full time – living and working on a boat," he said. "If you are one of those people taking quarantine seriously, a boat relieves the cabin fever."

Working from a boat can work for the whole family, he added. One client Denison sold a boat to proceed to travel to Tahiti and is homeschooling their children from the yacht, he said.

## IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL

As freeing a Zoom call from the middle of the Atlantic Ocean may be, boating during a pandemic comes with a new set of challenges, said Angela Rosenberg, president of West Palm Beach-based Angari Foundation and captain of the non-profit's 65-foot vessel.

As captain, part of her job is to facilitate a remote work environment for passengers, who can be at sea for weeks at a time on research excursions. Covid-19 has made that task more difficult, she said.

Travel restrictions became one of the more pressing issues for her and her ship, Rosenberg said.

"You used to be able to just say, 'Let's go to the Bahamas,' and go," she said. "Now there's a lot more planning and paperwork involved."

The Bahamas continues to be a sought-after destination among yachters, Denison said. But according to the Bahamian government's guidelines for private vessels, all boats entering the country's waters must request permission before arrival and detail the medical condition of every onboard traveler.

Once that hurdle is cleared, Rosenberg still prefers to limit the interactions of her crew and passengers with the outside world.

"We're not exploring the shores in populated areas," she said. "We're isolating with the same eight or so people."

That's an acceptable option for many,



ANGARI FOUNDATION

Captain Angela Rosenberg, president of West Palm Beach-based Angari Foundation.

Denison said.

Part of the appeal of remote work aboard a boat is the ability to self-isolate freely, and it's the reason so many people are buying yachts in 2020.

## SIGNAL BOOST

Necessary for any work-from-a-boat plan is a solid internet connection. That's where Marc Curreri, founder and president of Fort Lauderdale-based marine electronics and repair company Marine Professionals, noticed the most new activity for his business.

"Everybody needs to stay connected these days," Curreri said. "Some just want to check emails, and others want to be able to be on a Zoom call and for the other people to never notice they're not in the office."

His and other similar marine compa-

**"We're not exploring the shores in populated areas. We're isolating with the same eight or so people."**

**ANGELA ROSENBERG,**  
Angari Foundation

nies offer three main internet solutions: a cellular source, a Wi-Fi hotspot or high-speed satellite.

The most expensive option, but the one that works best for prolonged work experiences at sea, is high-speed satellite. It essentially equips a vessel with the same router capabilities as a home, Curreri explained, although the signal needs to be boosted in multiple places on a yacht in

order for it to work throughout.

"In a house, there's one source of internet," he said. "On a boat, in most cases, we're providing three sources."

It usually takes three days to fully equip a boat with satellite internet, as the process involves cutting into the boat to run wiring, Curreri said.

For those looking for a less-invasive option, he said a Wi-Fi hotspot can feed off of the internet near marinas to allow passengers to work from their boat.

Denison said equipping a boat with internet capabilities has been one of the first priorities for new boat owners during the pandemic.

"If this pandemic happened 10 or 15 years ago, it would have been a lot more challenging," he said. "But, as technology evolved, the ability to work aboard a boat has gotten a lot easier."



# Marine Industries Association of South Florida Takes the Initiative

Starting in mid-March, every day brought new challenges and varying interpretations of COVID-19 emergency orders, but the Marine Industries Association of South Florida

consistently worked with local, state, and federal agencies, law enforcement, elected officials, and professional lobbyists to confirm and protect the marine industry's status as an essential enterprise. As specific situations arose, all necessary stakeholders became engaged to help provide clarity and understanding of the orders and keep our essential marine businesses open.

Hundreds of services that the marine industry provides were deemed essential to South Florida boatyards and marinas. Fortunately, most yards have multiple acres that easily allowed for physical distancing to be accomplished in outdoor spaces, and businesses employed the Center for Disease Control recommended screening processes by stopping visitors, vendors, and employees at a centralized gate, asking specific travel questions, taking temperatures, and refusing access to anyone in question.

The strength and solidarity of fellow Floridians and Americans who tackled this healthcare crisis provided hope and confidence that our efforts would help contain the disease and spur an economic recovery going forward.

## Yacht Service Technician Apprenticeship Program

Similar to other industries in the U.S., such as construction and aviation, the marine industry has an aging skilled trade workforce that must be replaced with the next generation of workers. To help build that workforce, MIA SF established Florida's first Yacht Service Technician Apprenticeship Program in 2019 with the Department of Education and Atlantic Technical College, and instruction began with the first class of apprentices in early 2020. Over the next two years, the apprentices will receive both classroom and on-the-job-training at local shipyards to learn a comprehensive set of basic skills in the areas of rigging, forklift and crane operation, pipefitting/plumbing, welding/fabricating, carpentry, and painting.

MIA SF and Atlantic Technical College selected Jonathan Lowell, founder of Iguana Marine, as the instructor for the first yacht service technician apprenticeship program in Florida. Lowell holds all seven professional designations offered by the American



Wages paid in the marine industry in Florida are typically 16% higher than the State average.

Boat & Yacht Council (ABYC) and has earned the prestigious title of ABYC Master Technician certified in marine electrical, diesel engines, gasoline engines, marine systems, AC/refrigeration, corrosion, and composite materials. Lowell was also a professor in the Marine Engineering program at Broward College and an honors graduate of that program.

A new apprenticeship class will begin in January 2021 and registration is open for apprentices and partner shipyards to join current participating yards, Derecktor Dania, Bradford Marine, and MarineMax.

## SALTY JOBS

Salty Jobs is now an award-winning series! The short-segment video series produced by MIA SF to promote marine jobs and career paths won the Bronze Telly Award for Social Video in the category of Education & Discovery for the episode filmed at Resolve Maritime Academy.

With three seasons completed, Salty Jobs has become a well-known video series, and with the explosion of video as a popular medium of communication,

the evolution of the show continues as Season Four is underway. Spin-offs from the series include Salty Scenes and Walk the Dock – a special series filmed during the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show. So far, the most popular episode was filmed at Lauderdale Marine Center and has been viewed more than 14,000 times on Facebook!



Florida has an opportunity to make strategic decisions and investments in its Blue Economy to restore prosperity, advance resilience, and promote sustainability. According to the Florida Ocean Alliance, to do that, leaders need to understand, value, and expand Florida's Blue Economy and ignite investing in 21st century approaches that improve natural systems and develop partnerships that leverage resources.

Leveraging resources through partnerships has begun in part through the ongoing efforts of the Marine Research Hub of South Florida, which fosters collaboration among its four university partners - FAU's Harbor

Branch Oceanographic Institute, NSU's Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography, FIU's College of Arts, Sciences, and Education, and UM's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, along with support from the Miami-Dade Beacon Council, Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, Business Development Board of Palm Beach County, and Marine Industries Association of South Florida, which collectively aim to advance research commercialization that will contribute to the health of our oceans and improve the human condition. That objective, combined with two \$100,000 competitive award prizes for cutting edge solutions and innovations offered annually through its partnership with Ocean Exchange, allows the Marine Research Hub to build on the Blue Economy ecosystem of academic research, economic development, and start-up funding.

Florida has essential, valuable, and iconic natural resources and human-built infrastructure along its 8,436 miles of coastline, the second longest coastline among U.S. states and territories, providing an essential baseline for the Blue Economy that can be used to evaluate short-term economic impacts and long-term recovery and growth.

## MARINE INDUSTRY



STAY AFLOAT

Stay Afloat party boats

# INSTEAD OF BACHELORETTES, PARTY BOATS NOW CATER TO FAMILIES

BY ASHLEY PORTERO  
aportero@bizjournals.com

**S**tir-crazy South Floridians who may not own a boat still want to take refuge on the water.

That's good news for local party boat companies, whose usual customer base of tourists and students has dried up during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I think a lot of people want to get their mind off of everything that's going on," said Amy Baxter, director of operations for Jupiter-based PonTiki Cruises. "Once the boat gets going and the wind gets blowing, it's like you can take a break from all of that."

The 10-year-old company operates one 45-foot public boat and one 28-foot private charter – which are usually packed with tourists, college students and bachelorette parties, she said. That changed after the coronavirus hit South Florida, forcing

PonTiki to close for six weeks when local restrictions prohibited public boat tours.

Locals were ready to get on the water by the time PonTiki reopened in June, Baxter said.

"We got calls from families who wanted to charter the smaller boat for private graduation parties, from parents who wanted to get their kids out of the house, from people who live in Miami-Dade and Broward who were looking for day-trip options," she said.

Initially, PonTiki was only operating its six-person private charter as a safety precaution. The company later relaunched its 45-foot boat at reduced capacity to host public cruises, featuring music, and beer and wine service.

Still, not everyone is ready to get out on a boat.

Like PonTiki, Fort Lauderdale-based Stay Afloat suspended operations in late March, before receiving the go-ahead to resume

service in early June. Although there was an uptick in passengers – especially families – when the company reopened, co-founder Andrew Cohen said it soon dropped off again once a resurgence of Covid cases led to a rollback in business reopenings.

"It seems like people have been wary of public places and scenarios since then," he said.

Before the pandemic, Stay Afloat had four boats – three small, private charters and one 49-passenger public boat – in downtown Fort Lauderdale and two vessels in Tampa. The company has since moved one of the smaller boats to Tampa, where Cohen said there's more demand for party boat charters.

"We can't even hit 50% for the public cruises [in Fort Lauderdale] right now," he said. The 2.5-hour public cruises include tours of local mansions, a ride through the waterways of Fort Lauderdale, and a stop at a sand bar for swimming.

**"We're starting to get bookings for dates between January and May 2021, so I think business will rebound."**

**ANDREW COHEN,**  
Stay Afloat

Cohen said Stay Afloat's business is typically driven by bachelor and bachelorette parties during the spring, and families during the summer and winter months. While passenger numbers declined over the summer, he said it looks like the tide could turn by early next year.

"We're starting to get bookings for dates between January and May 2021, so I think business will rebound," he said.

In contrast, PonTiki's Baxter said she's more concerned about winter bookings after a better-than-expected summer. The holiday months are usually packed with bookings for corporate team-building and holiday parties, but she's not sure they can depend on that in a year where many companies are still avoiding large gatherings.

"Corporate bookings are down, and that's something that's really important for us," she said. "We're still waiting to see what will happen."



# LIQUID INVESTMENT

## *Marinas and shipyards attract venture capital*

With interest and investment in working waterfront growing substantially for the past few years, the face of the marine industry in South Florida has been changing and evolving. From extensive economic improvements at RMK-Merrill Stevens on the Miami River to an expansive plan to attract super yacht refit and repair to Derecktor Shipyard in Fort Pierce, marinas and shipyards are attractive additions to many investment portfolios, creating a high performing asset class.

Suntex Marina Investors, LLC is operating and developing two extraordinary properties owned by the city of Fort Lauderdale, Las Olas Marina and Bahia Mar Yachting Center, which are essential sites to the annual Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show. With a 50-year lease at Las Olas Marina, the Suntex improvement plan, unanimously approved by the Fort Lauderdale City Commission, includes eight additional slips to accommodate yachts up to 250 feet. The substantial upland improvements include construction of a two-story building and three-story building that will collectively provide commercial space for maritime businesses and house restaurants, the dockmaster's office, ship's store, and a rooftop gym and pool, all designed to enhance the City's planned beach access, renovated sidewalks, and additional parking.

David Filler, Suntex's principal, explained, Las Olas Marina would be "an inviting, walkable, and vibrant waterfront complex that complements the Yachting Capital of the World."

The Bahia Mar Yachting Center has been undergoing improvements, as well, since Suntex took over from Tate Capital with a significant investment in fourth quarter 2019. The dockmaster's office has undergone renovations, new all-weather security cameras have been installed, upgraded Wi-Fi and electrical systems have been put in place, all the pumps in the marina have been rebuilt for efficiency, and a new key card parking system was developed for ease of access to hotel amenities and to enter and exit the property. Larger improvements include the dredging of the waterway along the face dock to 15' and repairing the pedestrian walkway over A1A to the beach.



David Filler, Suntex Marina principal, says, "Las Olas Marina will be an inviting, walkable, and vibrant waterfront complex that complements the Yachting Capital of the World."

Purchased by Tavistock Development Co. in late 2016, the famous Pier Sixty-Six Hotel & Marina suffered serious damage from Hurricane Irma in September of 2017 and is currently undergoing a rebirth. Since it's life as a fuel dock and gas station for Phillips 66 Petroleum in the 1950s to the iconic spire tower that pierced the Fort Lauderdale skyline in the 1960s to its "groundbreaking" future, which began on March 12, 2020, this property has been considered a jewel in the town known as the Venice of America. Through substantial investment by Tavistock, it is currently being repaired, restored, and reimaged to include multiple residences, a new 10-story hotel building, a signature restaurant overlooking the water, an expanded fitness center, additional event and ballroom spaces, two-tier pool deck with separate adult-only and family-friendly pools, and, of course the completely renovated spire-top hotel tower.

Pier South at Pier Sixty-Six Marina, one of the sites of the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, has already undergone a massive transformation and now delivers full service offerings to the superyacht community, providing the largest vessels with docking capabilities never seen before in Fort Lauderdale. The new floating docks at Pier South provide the largest superyachts an option to dock at a private marina and experience world-class services, amenities, and hospitality. Pier South will soon be a designated

foreign trade zone (FTZ) and includes an innovative dock system made up of multiple single-cast concrete floating structures – the only system in the southeast U.S., 36" high freeboard (floating dock means no need to adjust lines or boarding ladders as tide fluctuates), max draft of 30', high volume water and pump out, in-dock high volume transfer fueling, up to 1000-amp power pedestals, high-speed Wi-Fi, golf cart access, and 24/7 security.

"Pier Sixty-Six is the gateway to Fort Lauderdale's waterways, and the strong commitment Tavistock has made to enhance our marina facilities positions this property as one of the East Coast's leading yachting destinations," said Megan Lagasse, marine director, Pier Sixty-Six Marina. The reimagination of the hotel, including introducing our first residential and retail offerings, will reawaken Pier Sixty-Six's spirit and once again make the property a true icon."

Driven by a desire to become an integral part of the Fort Lauderdale marine community, John and Michael Kelly appeared on the scene in January 2019 by acquiring Bradford Marine, a family-owned marina, shipyard, and yacht brokerage that also includes a full-service marina in Freeport, Grand Bahama. As former corporate executives in the fields of telecommunications and finance, the dynamic duo of father and son funneled their life-long love of boating into an opportunity to develop their own

family business and have steadily been enhancing the facility by investing in both physical and human capital.

The Kellys purchased neighboring Billfish Marina in May 2020, adding the affiliated entities of PipeWelders Marine, P&R Canvas, and High Seas Technology to their portfolio.

On the company website, Michael says their goal is to expand the Bradford Marine community of owners, captains, and crew through top-quality workmanship, premium covered dockage, and a family approach to the yachting lifestyle.

After a \$30 million investment last year by owner Rahmi M. Koc, the RMK-Merrill Stevens shipyard on the Miami River was revamped to turn Florida's oldest shipyard into one of the most advanced yards available to yacht and superyacht owners, captains, and crew.

Dating back over 135 years, the facility's North Yard and South Yard underwent monumental changes. The new North Yard features a state-of-the-art 2,700-ton lift, an updated facility, on-site crew lounge, shore power supply for up to 650 amps, and the most advanced environmental protection

system in the State with a new subterranean water filtration system that cleans and reuses runoff water, setting a new standard for shipyards seeking to improve local waterways.

Located directly across the Miami

*Continued on page 27*



The Billfish Marina complex is now part of the Bradford Marine family.



Bahia Mar Yachting Center, Fort Lauderdale, FL

## MARINE INDUSTRY

# 'SALTWATER DISTANCING' DRIVES SOUTH FLORIDA BOAT SALES



Bob Denison of Denison Yachting

JOCK FISTICK / SOUTH FLORIDA BUSINESS JOURNAL

BY ASHLEY PORTERO  
 aporterob@bizjournals.com

**I**nvisible Boats VP of Sales Bill Cordes wasn't sure if he should panic in the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic.

After all, a boat – especially a high-end one – is the epitome of a luxury product, Cordes said. In the midst of a pandemic that was fueling job losses and economic uncertainty, he assumed a recreational vessel would be among the first items consumers would cut from their budgets.

Cordes said if he knew then what he does now, he wouldn't have lost any sleep.

"We actually have the biggest backlog of orders in the history of the company right now," he said. "We can't build boats fast enough."

Across the country, more people are getting out on the water as coronavirus-related travel restrictions keep them close to home.

New boat sales, from saltwater fish-

ing boats to yachts, reached their highest point in a decade in May, according to the most recent data available from the National Marine Manufacturers Association. Sales dipped in March and April, but soon recovered from pandemic-related losses, the report said.

And sales kept up all summer. Seventy-three percent of boat dealers reported retail growth in August, according to the Marine Retailers Association. Demand was so high that 82% of dealers said new boat inventory was too low that month, while 89% said used boat inventory was also lean.

That reflects the activity monitored by Miami-based Boat Traders, an online marketplace for new and used boats. After a dip in April, sales began to rise in May and June – and haven't stopped, VP of Marketing Courtney Chalmers said.

Sales have been strongest for vessels under 26 feet and in the 26-to-35-foot range, she said. Sales of smaller personal watercraft, like jet skis, are also soaring.

Yacht sales haven't budged much, but

**"A lot of our buyers have been families who were on the fence about the purchase, but then quarantine pushed them over that fence."**

**BOB DENISON,**  
 Denison Yachting

Chalmers said that isn't unusual.

"The people who can afford a yacht will buy when they want it, strong economy or not," she said.

Bob Denison, founder of Fort Lauderdale's Denison Yachting, said boat dealers are benefiting from the appeal of what he calls "saltwater distancing."

Families, especially those with children, have been eager to find a safe recreational option that won't expose them to the virus, he said. And going out for a private cruise in the bay or ocean is about as far away from the virus as you can get.

"A lot of our buyers have been families who were on the fence about the purchase, but then quarantine pushed them over that fence," said Denison, who said sales were up 25%, year-over-year, in September.

Boat Traders also reports families are behind the summer spike in boat sales.

Chalmers said online browsing activity by women, which the company tracks through Google Analytics, increased 75%, year-over-year, from May to August. According to Boat Traders, the data indicates that some of that activity is tied to women who have children sequestered at home with them.

"[It shows] some of the surge in sales can be pointed to women and moms who want to escape to the water and practice social distancing with family," she said.

Cordes said travel restrictions are boosting new boat orders at Miami-based Invincible Boats, which builds semi-custom catamarans.

"A lot of the buyers are people who would usually spend some of the summer in New York or Europe, but now they're spending more time in Florida," he said. "So they're putting money into a new boat."

Cordes acknowledged that Invincible Boats' buyers are high earners with money to spend. Most of their customers have an average income of at least \$500,000 a year.

Now, Cordes just has to see if sales keep up this fall and winter.

September is usually Invincible Boats' slowest month, but not this year. The pandemic has thrown the usual rule book out the window, he said.

Boat Traders' Chalmers said the pandemic could be a boon for the marine industry because it forced so many people to turn to boating for entertainment.

"The rise in female participation in particular is a positive sign because bringing in more first-time buyers is key for the industry's long-term health," she said.



Continued from page 25

River from the North Yard, the new South Yard will focus on repairs and refits for large cruisers and sport fishing boats. The investment in the shipyard brings an estimated 100 new jobs to the area, including technical engineers, marine procurement specialists, skilled tradesmen, and yacht quality finish painters.

In May 2019, the St. Lucie County Commission approved a 30-year, \$37 million contract with Derecktor Shipyard to operate a mega-yacht refit and repair center at the Port of Fort Pierce, expanding the company's U.S. operations to four facilities along the length of the East Coast. Founded by Bob Derecktor in 1947 in Mamaroneck, New York, where the original yard continues to offer repair services to yachts and commercial vessels, the other facilities are located in Robinhood, Maine and Dania Beach, Florida - a large yacht repair facility that has been operating for the past 53 years.

Last month, construction crews were hard at work at Derecktor Fort Pierce, conducting load testing to ensure the land can support up to four million pounds, which is the approximate weight of a 250' vessel being hauled by a 1,500 ton mobile lift. More than 25 vessels have docked at the port so far for everything from dockage



**RMK-Merrill Stevens on the Miami River received a massive investment in renovations and upgrades.**



**Derecktor Shipyard Ft. Pierce is building its refit and repair center**

to clearing customs to maintenance.

Since acquiring the property formerly known as Fort Lauderdale Boatyard and Marina in 2016, PORT 32, which has marinas in Palm Beach Gardens, Tampa, and Charleston, South Carolina, has been redeveloping the property located on the New River across from Marina Mile Yachting Center. In May 2019, Phase 1 of the facility officially reopened with soon new in-water service slips that can accommodate yachts up to 150' and hauling capabilities for vessels of 120' or less for service at the upland yard will be available using onsite contractors or outside service professionals.

Work is ongoing to build a significant-size and much-anticipated dry stack for

hundreds of boats between 25' and 55'.

While much of the stack will be designated for primary boat owners, some spots will be for reserved short- and long-term tender stowage for the convenience of the mega-yachts undergoing maintenance onsite.

When completed in 2021, PORT 32 will offer unrivaled amenities for recreational boaters, including an onsite fuel dock, Florida's largest dry stack with 700+ dry slips for boats up to 55', a facility designed to withstand up to 140 mph wind loads as a proven hurricane hole, and a convenient location directly off I-95 on the New River, with easy access to the Intracoastal Waterway and Port Everglades inlet.

Safe Harbor was formed through an

acquisition of multiple portfolios with 31 marina locations across 12 states, systematically growing by October 2019 into 85 properties in 19 states, including Fort Lauderdale's Summerfield Boat Works, which originally began its operations in 1930. Now known as Safe Harbor South Fork and scheduled to open in fall 2021, it is slated to become one of Fort Lauderdale's premier locations for yachting captains and crew and is being newly developed exclusively as a Safe Harbor mega-yacht location, with state-of-the-art facilities that will complement upscale amenities while offering convenient access to Fort Lauderdale's illustrious beaches and cultural attractions.

## WOMEN WORKING ON THE WATER CREATE THEIR OWN WORKPLACE

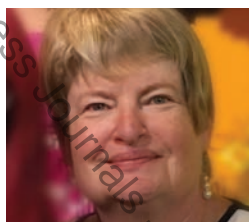
### Culture



**Julie Berry** is the Senior Vice President of Marina Investments Group, which has sold more than \$325 million in recent marine related transactions. A native of Fort Lauderdale, Julie joined Stiles Realty in 1988, where she worked in corporate office leasing for development companies in downtown Fort Lauderdale, and then eventually moved into investment sales. While working on an acquisition that included a marina and boatyard, she was introduced to a whole new world of marina sales and transactions, where she has now focused her business for more than 10 years. She finds marina properties are particularly interesting because no two properties are alike. The people in the marine industry are also very different because they typically have a history and an emotional attachment to their property, which creates a more personal working relationship.



**Kim Sweers** is the managing partner of FB Marine Group, one of South Florida's leading marine dealerships. Founded in 1994 by her husband Randy, the company started as a brokerage firm, grew to have multiple locations, and will soon be relocating to a new 23,000 square foot building in Pompano Beach. Kim previously worked as vice president of sales for a data company before investing in FB Marine Group and growing the business to include sales and service of new and preowned boats, yacht management, charter, and government service contracts, which proved to be a lifeline when the pandemic first hit. The pandemic ultimately created an unusual surge in first-time boat buyers who Kim routinely encourages to practice social distancing on the water by avoiding large groups and refraining from rafting-up with other boaters. Having overcome financial crises as well as personal health challenges over the years, Kim welcomes each day with eternal optimism and a strong sense of purpose.



**Vicki Abernathy** was born and raised in Washington, D.C., attended the University of Maryland, and worked briefly on Capitol Hill. Her career began as a technical recruiter in human resources and she spent 30 years working in human resources for Marriott Hotels. Her husband, Gary, bought a South Florida company focused on developing "practical technology" products at the same time Vicki was recruited to Florida by an international communication contracting company. Vicki was helping Gary by keeping the books when they came upon the idea of creating inflatable boat fenders for small boats with limited space on board, but the product took on a life of its own and they were being asked to make inflatable fenders that were big enough for mega-yachts before they even knew what a mega-yacht was. In 2012, they changed the company name to AERÉ. Vicki sees the next generation of inflatables in small boats, kayaks, docks, and work platforms and flexes her political muscle by annually attending the American Boating Congress and advocating on behalf of the marine industry.



**Heather Valdez** is the general manager at Sailorman – the world's largest and most unique new & used marine emporium, which was purchased by her father, Chuck Fitzgerald, in 1985. Heather worked in the store as a teenager before attending Florida Atlantic University. After college she married and raised four boys and in 2016 was looking at re-entering the workforce full-time. When Chuck decided to retire but deals fell through to buy the business, Heather chose to keep the Sailorman ship afloat. She values the personal relationships that she's developed with her employees and customers, preferring to appreciate the big picture rather than just the bottom line.

**In this section celebrating Women Working on the Water, hats off to Brunswick Corporation, who earlier this year was named to Forbes list of Best Employers for Diversity. In addition, Brunswick was honored as a 2019 Corporate Champion by the Women's Forum of New York for accelerating gender parity in the boardroom with 30% or more board seats held by women.**

## MARINE INDUSTRY

## DOUG WEST ON THE EVOLUTION OF LAUDERDALE MARINE CENTER



Lauderdale Marine Center, the nation's largest yacht repair facility, underwent big changes since private equity giant The Carlyle Group

bought the property in 2015.

Doug West was appointed to lead the transformation shortly after the estimated \$140 million deal closed. The former Rybovich Boat Co. executive, who previously held leadership positions at AutoNation and Blockbuster, has led the center through \$35 million in upgrades and transitions in how it does business.

West offered insights into how LMC has changed over the years, and his view of the industry in the age of coronavirus:

#### What has changed because of Covid-19?

When it started back in March, we looked at migration patterns for these boats. They're going to be in the Caribbean for fall and winter, and go to the shipyard in early spring to get ready for summer trips. Our spring was always busy, and we're higher than last year in terms of revenue and visits. We're up double digits over last year, but I wouldn't equate all that to Covid because there were many boats that were going to come here anyway. Our summer was also busier this year than it typically is. I think we're going to continue to see increases because there are more boats out there, new and in use, than there were pre-pandemic.

#### Do you think virtual boat shows will affect business?

I think the boat show is a traffic driver for South Florida – and we benefit – and virtual boat shows, I think, are a good idea to stimulate interest in vessels. But I can't imagine many people making a decision without riding in it and understanding how it's set up and how it fits their lifestyle.

#### Can you talk about the upgrades since the property was purchased?

We added a fitness center, a crew lounge area, an open workspace area, a restaurant and a floating bar. The restaurant opened in November of last year and the bar opened in March this year. Before I came here, I was the president of Rybovich. We added a crew lounge and restaurant up there, and we saw success with that. It's having an impact on the customer experience at LMC and, as a result, we're seeing 80% of our customers



LAUDERDALE MARINE CENTER  
**DOUG WEST**, president of Lauderdale Marine Center

return. We track vessel visits and the number of unique visits each year, and they have been increasing every year. It equates to more profit. We're up over 40% in operating income. We also bought new equipment, reconfigured our marina to handle larger boats, and went from 300 tons to 485 tons lifting capacity and added lifts.

#### Are your operations different?

In early 2016, we had 72 tenants with a lot of small offices and workshops. We increased the square footage by about 35%, but reduced the tenants to 30. So we have tenants that made this their home and not just their second location, and they help drive traffic here. For instance, we secured Ferretti Yachts as a tenant three years ago and in January this year their U.S. services division. They rent from us a 30,000-square-foot workshop space, office space and several slips. We had 43 employees in 2015, and we've more than doubled that to 92 employees.

#### Any changes that brought in significant business?

In 2017, we became the first marine foreign trade zone, where boats registered in a foreign country – especially the bigger ones – could be shown for sale to U.S. citizens. In the past, to do your closing, you had to go outside of U.S. waters. Now, they can close the transaction while the boat's in the dock. We have 12 boats today in foreign trade zone slips. The number of transactions this year alone is at least 15.

—Emon Reiser

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## MARINE INDUSTRY

## LISTMAKER PROFILE

## SUSTAINABLE MARINE COMPANY FINDS SUCCESS AMID CHANGE

**W**artsila North America's secret to success has always been its willingness to change.

"We constantly look for ways to never be stagnant," said Aaron Bresnahan, president and managing director for the company's U.S. operations. "It's how we as a global corporation have been in business for nearly 200 years."

Founded in 1834 in Finland primarily as a sawmill and iron works company, Wartsila has transformed and expanded to become one of the world's largest sustainable energy and marine companies.

Wartsila first planted roots in the U.S. in 1979, and its first South Florida office opened 10 years later.

In its marine work, the company provides engineers, electric and automation services, propulsion equipment and any other environmental equipment to merchants, cruise lines and naval vessels.

Due to Covid-19's impact on the cruise sector, the company has had to adjust its strategy. But it has been able to do so with little worry of success.



**AARON BRESNAHAN**, president and managing director of Wartsila North America

"The great thing about our company is that we've never had all our eggs in one basket," Bresnahan said. "So even though the majority of our U.S. maritime sector's focus is on supplying cruise lines, we still have our work with merchants and special vessels to lean on."

Even with the unknown timeline of the pandemic's impact on the cruise industry, Bresnahan remains optimistic about Wartsila's ability to weather the storm.

"It definitely affects our decision-making and how we're moving forward in business, but it's not the end of the world," he said. "Market conditions will always have impacts one way or another, but we're always ready to adapt to them."

As he looks toward the future, Bresnahan is excited about continuing Wartsila's dedication to sustainable innovation. He hopes that other companies will soon realize the value of coming together on a global scale to find solutions to making the planet a better place.

"There are so many solutions and new technologies being developed abroad that can propel us further into a positive direction," he said. "We're all in this together, and we need to open our minds to looking at solutions that can come from different places."

— Jessica Bryant

## LISTMAKER PROFILE

## COASTAL ENGINEERING FIRM BECOMES LOCAL MARINAS' GO-TO CONSULTANT

**A**ppled Technology and Management did not set out to work with marinas.

But the evolution was natural for the coastal engineering firm whose roots began in Florida.

"To our founders, it just made sense," said Michael Jenkins, coastal engineering principal at ATM. "You can't work in the coastal environment in Florida and not come across marinas."

Over the course of more than 30 years in business, ATM has carved out a niche for itself in serving the marine industry, while still acting as an engineer for the coastal environment at large.

The company's focus is on providing expertise in the form of design, financial evaluation and optimization of water-related facilities. ATM additionally handles permitting, hiring a contractor and overseeing the contractor's work for its clients.

"[This field] requires a very specific type of expertise. You can't just get a book and



**MICHAEL JENKINS**, coastal engineering principal at Applied Technology and Management

figure out how to do any of this," Jenkins said. "It comes from experience."

For Jenkins, that experience came from working in the coastal industry since earning his Ph.D. after college, where he majored in ocean engineering. In 2004, he began working with ATM, where he's been able to broaden his knowledge over the last 16 years.

"When you're dealing with the coastal environment, it's very unique," he said. "It requires an understanding of specific needs, like long-term issues regarding sea-level rise and climate change, or understanding impacts of hurricanes."

At ATM, knowing how to balance all these issues for clients and being able to convey the right choices to make are what make their work most valuable, Jenkins said.

Jenkins also credits the company's success to its well-balanced backlog of work, along with lessons learned from the 2008 recession. These factors have also given

ATM the ability to navigate through Covid-19's impacts with minimal struggles.

"In 2008, we were overleveraged in private-sector work, which really went belly up at the time," he said. "As a result, we adopted more sustainable practices moving forward and became conscious in having a more diverse backlog of private- and public-sector work."

It is the public-sector work that is still advancing, while many of ATM's private-sector projects have been capped or put on hold during this time, Jenkins said.

Still, he can't help but be grateful for the unique position the marine industry is currently in.

"It's not all bad news right now. The opportunity to escape by spending time on a boat is even more valuable now during Covid than it was pre-Covid for most people," he said. "Marinas are being used, which means we have opportunities going forward."

— Jessica Bryant

## MARINE INDUSTRY

## LISTMAKER PROFILE

## WITH RENOVATIONS, RMK MERRILL-STEVENS EYES RETURN TO GLORY DAYS

William Clewes knew he was in for a challenge when he became CEO of RMK Merrill-Stevens. What he didn't know is that a global pandemic would hit less than two months into the job.

"I had about a month of getting my feet under the desk and learning about what was going on with the company before Covid happened," he said. "It's been a struggle."

He initially became involved with the longstanding shipyard on the Miami River when a mutual acquaintance of Clewes and Rahmi M. Koc, the Turkish billionaire who holds majority ownership of RMK Merrill-Stevens, suggested he was someone who could help "restore the facility to its former glory."

Founded in the early 1900s by Arthur Stevens and brothers James and Alexander Merrill, RMK Merrill-Stevens has served as a storage, maintenance and repair center for large vessels since its inception. Its clientele has ranged from the wealthy and notorious to the U.S. military.



**WILLIAM CLEWES,**  
CEO of RMK Merrill-Stevens

As the company has evolved through the years and other large shipyards have entered the market, RMK Merrill-Stevens has continued to renovate its two locations on either side of the river in order to expand its offerings.

Clewes was ready to tackle Merrill-Stevens' transformation after serving as the director of operations for a shipping company in Vancouver. But since joining the team, he's had to make some adjustments to his plans.

"It's been a bit longer of a struggle than I was anticipating due to the pandemic. But we've got our North Yard renovation on track, and it will be able to lift much larger vessels than previously," he said. "We're just waiting now on a permit from the city of Miami."

The North Yard, also known as the Miami Superyacht Center, has been reconstructed to feature a new shiplift that will have the capacity to lift yachts weighing up to 2,700 tons out of the water. It's been closed since 2017 due to

renovations, but is expected to fully open later this year.

The South Yard, where the Merrill-Stevens team is currently operating, has also undergone changes, with equipment and tools added to its new stockroom where parts are sold to vessel owners.

"We are very excited about the coming months when we can completely open both the North and South yards for work," Clewes said. "But for now, as we wait, my focus is on my team."

The one benefit of the pandemic, he said, is that mass layoffs at other companies allowed RMK Merrill-Stevens to make plenty of new hires to build and strengthen its team.

"We've been fortunate," Clewes said. "My future goal is to have a full professional management team and a trades group to work on the superyachts in the area. And, as always, we want to be profitable to owners and do quality work for customers at a fair price."

— Jessica Bryant

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ELIE LEVY, Sunwave  
CHRISTOPHER PERNICANO, Tellus, LLC.

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VLADIMIR PEREZ FELIPE, Univista Insurance  
KEVIN SMITH, Gehring Group | Bentek

### More than \$100 Million

JULIO JOGAIB, BankUnited  
MARTHA POULTER, Royal Caribbean  
JAY SMITH, TracFone

### Nonprofit

ERNIE FERNANDEZ, University of Miami  
MICHAEL GARCIA, Jackson Health Systems  
JEFFREY S. STURMAN, Memorial Healthcare System

## SPECIAL AWARD HONOREES

### Innovation: \$10 Million to \$100 Million

RICHARD BARNDT, CentralReach

### Innovation: More than \$100 Million

CHRISTOPHER HUNT, Bankers Healthcare Group

### Innovation: Under \$10 Million

DAVID HARTMANN, SilverLogic, LLC

### 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award Recipient

RAJEEV RAVINDRAN, Ryder System, Inc.

Check out our **October 30, 2020** issue where we will announce the winners and celebrate all of our honorees!

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# THE LIST

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## MARINE INDUSTRY BUSINESSES BY EMPLOYEES

RANKED BY SOUTH FLORIDA EMPLOYEES

	Company / Prior (*Not ranked in 2019) / URL	Address Phone	Employees	Products / services	Top executive	Year founded
1	<b>JL Audio</b> ① jlaudio.com	10369 N. Commerce Parkway Miramar 33025 954-443-1100	416	Marine, mobile, home & powersports audio	Lucio Proni	1975
2	<b>MarineMax</b> ② marinemax.com	750 S. Federal Highway Pompano Beach 33062 954-618-0440	310	Boat sales, yacht sales, brokerage & service	Paul Cummings	1998
3	<b>Wartsila North America</b> * wartsila.com	2900 S.W. 42nd St. Fort Lauderdale 33312 954-465-8267	270	Diesel engines and generators, propulsion systems, ship design, electrical and automation, environmental solutions and natural gas systems	Jaakko Eskola	1990
4	<b>Land 'N' Sea Distributing</b> ④ landnsea.net	3131 N. Andrews Ave. Ext. Pompano Beach 33064 800-432-7652	183	Boat accessories, engine parts, boat maintenance & repair products, controls, rigging & props, RV & PWC parts & accessories	Michael Connors	1975
5	<b>Bradford Marine</b> ⑤ bradford-marine.com	3051 W. State Road 84 Fort Lauderdale 33312 954-791-3800	165	Yacht refit, repair, service, dockage, drydock, yacht sales	Michael Kelly	1966
6	<b>Nautical Ventures Group</b> ⑨ nauticalventures.com	50 S. Bryan Road Dania Beach 33004 954-926-5250	121	Boats, motors, yacht tenders, yacht toys, kayaks, marine service	Roger Moore	2010
7	<b>Denison Yachting</b> ⑧ denisonyachtsales.com	1535 S.E. 17th St. Fort Lauderdale 33316 954-763-3971	114	Yacht brokerage, new boat sales, boat service, charter management, charter brokerage & crew placement	Bob Denison	1991
8	<b>Pantropic Power</b> ⑥ pantropic.com	8205 N.W. 58th St. Miami 33166 305-592-4944	112	Caterpillar marine engine and generator sales & service, parts & product support	Luis Botas	1986
9	<b>Yacht Management</b> ⑫ myyachtmanagement.com	3001 W. State Road 84 Fort Lauderdale 33312 954-941-6447	103	Yacht management, boatyard, yacht care, bottom painting, mechanical repairs, electrical repairs	Joshua Kerrigan	2001
10	<b>Derecktor Florida</b> ⑩ derecktor.com	775 Taylor Lane Dania Beach 33004 954-920-5756	100	Fabrication, pipe fitting, heavy mechanical, paint, composite & joiner work	Paul Derecktor	1967
11	<b>Lauderdale Marine Center</b> ⑪ lauderdalemarinecenter.com	2029 S.W. 20th St. Fort Lauderdale 33315 954-713-0333	92	Recreational vessel service and repair	Doug West	1996
12	<b>Informa Markets</b> ⑭ informa.com	1650 S.E. 17th St., No. 412 Fort Lauderdale 33316-1935 954-764-7642	72	Manages the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, Miami Yacht Show, Palm Beach International Boat Show	Charlie McCurdy	1976
13	<b>Neptune Boat Lifts</b> ⑰ neptuneboatlifts.com	288 S.W. 21st Terrace Fort Lauderdale 33312 954-524-3616	63	Boat & yacht lifts, elevator lifts, cradle/4-post lifts, cargo lifts, custom aluminum floating docks, aluminum boat ramps, railings & accessories	Randy Whitesides	2007
14	<b>ZF Marine Propulsion Systems Miramar</b> ⑮ zf.com/marine	15351 S.W. 29th St., Suite 300 Miramar 33027 954-646-5676	60	Transmissions, thrusters, propellers, controls, surface drives, parts & service	Wolfgang Schmid	2004
15	<b>Frank &amp; Jimmie's Propeller</b> ⑮ fjprop.com	200 S.W. Sixth St. Fort Lauderdale 33301 954-467-7723	48	Propeller design, engineering & sales, propeller reconditioning & modification, manufacturing propeller shafting, machine shop for FJ Propeller Racing division	Jimmie Harrison	1947
16	<b>MAN Engines &amp; Components</b> ⑳ man-engines.com	591 S.W. 13th Terrace Pompano Beach 33069 954-946-9092	45	Full-service shipyard, yacht and vessel refit and repair	Julia Milbert	1997
16	<b>RMK Merrill-Stevens</b> * rmkmerrill-stevens.com	881 N.W. 13th Ave. Miami 33125 305-324-5211	45	Full-service shipyard, refit and repair yachts & vessels	William Clewes	1910
18	<b>DeAngelo Marine Exhaust</b> * deangelomarine.com	3330 S.W. Second Ave. Fort Lauderdale 33315 954-763-3005	40	Installation & manufacturing of marine exhaust components	Robert Montes	1986
19	<b>Jones Superyacht Miami</b> * jonesdrydock.com	3399 N.W. South River Drive Miami 33142 305-635-0891	35	Mechanical, electrical, topside and bottom paint, welding and carpentry services	Victor Bared	1917
19	<b>Lauderdale Marina</b> * lauderdalemarina.com	1900 S.E. 15th St. Fort Lauderdale 33316 954-523-8507	35	New & used Boston Whaler boats, fuel dock/dockage, waterfront restaurant (15th Street Fisheries), Yamaha and Mercury outboards/parts, service department	Scott Clark	1948
21	<b>AccuDock</b> * accudock.com	1790 S.W. 13th Court Pompano Beach 33069 9547857557	30	Residential, marina, commercial, rowing, camps & parks and ADA-compliant docks	John Harrison	2007
21	<b>High Seas Yacht Service</b> * highseasyachtservice.com	2001 S.W. 20th St., Bay 111 Fort Lauderdale 33315 954-975-8220	30	Engine alignment, shaft machine shop, hydraulic repair, stabilizer, bow thruster, crane	Christopher Brown	1976
21	<b>Lank Oil Co.</b> * lankoil.com	2203 W. McNab Road Pompano Beach 33069 954-978-6600	30	Fuel delivery to yachts, marinas, construction sites, generators, truck fleets, gas stations & more	Kristene Tokesky William Lank Jr.	1965
21	<b>Merritt Marine Supply</b> * merrittsupply.com	2621 N.E. Fourth Ave. Pompano Beach 33064 954-946-5350	30	Distributes products from over 100 manufacturers	Tim Oenbrink Allen Pinnell	1975
25	<b>FB Marine Group</b> ⑮ fbmarinegroup.com	2311 S.W. 31st St. Fort Lauderdale 33312 954-581-8355	28	Contender, Statement & Century boats; Intrepid & Victory powerboats; marine parts & service	Kim Sweers	1994

SOURCE(S): Information was obtained from the companies' representatives and could not be independently verified by the Business Journal.  
NOTES: NA - not applicable, not available or not approved

# THE LIST

Compiled by Jessica Bryant  
786-533-8217, @SFBJData  
jbryant@bizjournals.com

## MARINE INDUSTRY BUSINESSES BY REVENUE

RANKED BY 2019 REVENUE

	Company / Prior (*Not ranked in 2019) / URL	Address Phone	Revenue 2019	Employees	Products / services	Top executive	Year founded
1	<b>ZF Marine Propulsion Systems Miramar</b> ① zf.com/marine	15351 S.W. 29th St., Suite 300 Miramar 33027 954-646-5676	\$36.5 billion	60	Transmissions, thrusters, propellers, controls, surface drives, parts & service	Wolfgang Schmid	2004
2	<b>MarineMax</b> ② marinemax.com	750 S. Federal Highway Pompano Beach 33062 954-618-0440	\$630 million	310	Boat sales, yacht sales, brokerage & service	Paul Cummings	1998
3	<b>GMT Global Marine Travel</b> ③ flygmt.com	1800 S.E. 10th Ave., Suite 320 Fort Lauderdale 33316 954-761-9595	\$180 million	28	Airline tickets, hotels, car rentals, transfers, helicopter & charters	Tim Davey	2001
4	<b>Pantropic Power</b> ⑤ pantropic.com	8205 N.W. 58th St. Miami 33166 305-592-4944	\$85 million	112	Caterpillar marine engine and generator sales & service, parts & product support	Luis Botas	1986
5	<b>Nautical Ventures Group</b> ⑧ nauticalventures.com	50 S. Bryan Road Dania Beach 33004 954-926-5250	\$43.57 million	121	Boats, motors, yacht tenders, yacht toys, kayaks, marine service	Roger Moore	2010
6	<b>Derecktor Florida</b> ⑦ derecktor.com	775 Taylor Lane Dania Beach 33004 954-920-5756	\$30 million	100	Fabrication, pipe fitting, heavy mechanical, paint, composite & joiner work	Paul Derecktor	1967
7	<b>FB Marine Group</b> ⑨ fbmarinegroup.com	2311 S.W. 31st St. Fort Lauderdale 33312 954-581-8355	\$24 million	28	Contender, Statement & Century boats; Intrepid & Victory powerboats; marine parts & service	Kim Sweers	1994
8	<b>Neptune Boat Lifts</b> ⑫ neptuneboatlifts.com	288 S.W. 21st Terrace Fort Lauderdale 33312 954-524-3616	\$16.8 million	63	Boat & yacht lifts, elevator lifts, cradle/4-post lifts, cargo lifts, custom aluminum floating docks, aluminum boat ramps, railings & accessories	Randy Whitesides	2007
9	<b>Yacht Management</b> ⑭ myyachtmanagement.com	3001 W. State Road 84 Fort Lauderdale 33312 954-941-6447	\$14.8 million	103	Yacht management, boatyard, yacht care, bottom painting, mechanical repairs, electrical repairs	Joshua Kerrigan	2001
10	<b>e3 Systems USA</b> * e3s.com	43123 N.W. 120th Ave. Coral Springs 33066 954-368-9980	\$14 million	6	Kymeta, Cobham, Intellian, Inmarsat, Speedcast, Cisco	Roger Horner	2014
11	<b>Complete Marine</b> ⑮ completeboat.com	800 S. Federal Highway Pompano Beach 33062 954-567-2628	\$11 million	27	Full-service marina with 50-ton Travelift, new and used boat sales, engine repairs, marine parts, fuel dock, yacht brokers	David Giannone	1986
12	<b>Jones Superyacht Miami</b> * jonesdrydock.com	3399 N.W. South River Drive Miami 33142 305-635-0891	\$10 million	35	Mechanical, electrical, topside and bottom paint, welding and carpentry services	Victor Bared	1917
13	<b>Applied Technology &amp; Management</b> * appliedtm.com	2047 Vista Parkway, Suite 101 West Palm Beach 33411 561-659-0041	\$9.9 million		Marina consulting, feasibility, engineering, design & procurement, coastal engineering, beach nourishment, SLR adaptation, sustainability	Michael Jenkins	1993
14	<b>Frank &amp; Jimmie's Propeller</b> ⑯ fjprop.com	200 S.W. Sixth St. Fort Lauderdale 33301 954-467-7723	\$8.8 million	18	Propeller design, engineering & sales, propeller reconditioning & modification, manufacturing propeller shafting, machine shop for FJ Propeller Racing division	Jimmie Harrison	1947
15	<b>JMP Marine</b> * jmpusamarine.com	13280 S.W. 131st St., Suite 111 Miami 33186 866-537-3959	\$7 million	2	Provides stock to distributors throughout the Americas	Frederick Leidecker	2010
16	<b>ADI Metal</b> ⑰ adimetal.com	2930 S.W. Second Ave. Fort Lauderdale 33315 866-825-9271	\$6.3 million	14	Aluminum 6061, 5086, 5083, 5052, 3003, 6063; stainless steel 316L, 304; copper nickel sheet, plate, fittings, flanges, angle, bar, I-beam, U-channel	Betsy McGee	1958
17	<b>High Seas Yacht Service</b> ⑳ highseasyachtservice.com	2001 S.W. 20th St., Bay 111 Fort Lauderdale 33315 954-975-8220	\$5.13 million	30	Engine alignment, shaft machine shop, hydraulic repair, stabilizer, bow thruster, crane	Christopher Brown	1976
18	<b>Moore &amp; Co.</b> * moore-and-co.com	255 Aragon Ave., 3rd floor Coral Gables 33134 786-924-6205	\$5 million		Litigation & transactional maritime law	Michael Moore	2004
19	<b>Concord Marine Electronics</b> * concordelectronics.com	2233 S. Federal Highway Fort Lauderdale 33316 954-779-1100	\$4.2 million	15	Navigation, communication, entertainment, security systems	Michael Robilio	1988
20	<b>Bluewater Books &amp; Charts</b> * bluewaterweb.com	3233 S.W. Second Ave. Fort Lauderdale 33315 954-763-6533	\$3.4 million	20	Paper & electronic charts, government publications, medical kits, nautical books & supplies, yacht services, nautical flags	Vivien Godfrey	1986
20	<b>Thomas Marine Systems</b> * thomasmarinesystems.com	2200 W. State Road 84 Fort Lauderdale 33312 954-727-1674	\$3.4 million	12	Air conditioning, refrigeration, watermakers	John Thomas	1967
22	<b>Atlantic Marine Power Systems</b> * ampsfl.com	2901 S.W. Second Ave. Fort Lauderdale 33315 954-763-7141	\$3.33 million	12	Generator set, engine & gyro stabilizer sales; generator, engine & electrical control system repairs & maintenance	Mike Koller	1991
23	<b>FGI Yacht Group</b> <sup>1</sup> * fgiyachtgroup.com	2400 E. Las Olas Blvd. Fort Lauderdale 33301 954-530-5208	\$3 million	7	Brokered yacht sales & charter vacations of all sizes, charter marketing for in-house fleet	Frank Grzeszczak	2020
23	<b>Southern Boating &amp; Yachting</b> * southernboating.com	1591 E. Atlantic Blvd., 2nd Floor Pompano Beach 33060 954-522-5515	\$3 million	16	Monthly print magazine, digital magazine, e-newsletters, marketing materials, publishing services, events	Skip Allen	1972
25	<b>Sailorman</b> * sailorman.com	3000 S. Andrews Ave. Fort Lauderdale 33316 954-522-6716	\$2.44 million	20	Anchors, chain, rope, fenders, cleaners and electrical	Heather Valdez Chuck Fitzgerald	1975

<sup>1</sup> Formerly Neptune Group Yachting