

# Southern border blues

THE HIGH VALUE OF THE CANADIAN DOLLAR HAS LEFT SOME OF CANADA'S BIG-BOAT BUILDERS FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL AND HAS FORCED MANY TO RETHINK THE WAY THEY DO BUSINESS

**BOB GREENWOOD REPORTS**

Counter to most of North America, British Columbia, along with its immediate neighbours in North America's Pacific North West, continues to enjoy vigorous economic growth. Yet its superyacht industry is fighting for its survival, while its counterparts elsewhere stoutly defy recessionary pressures.

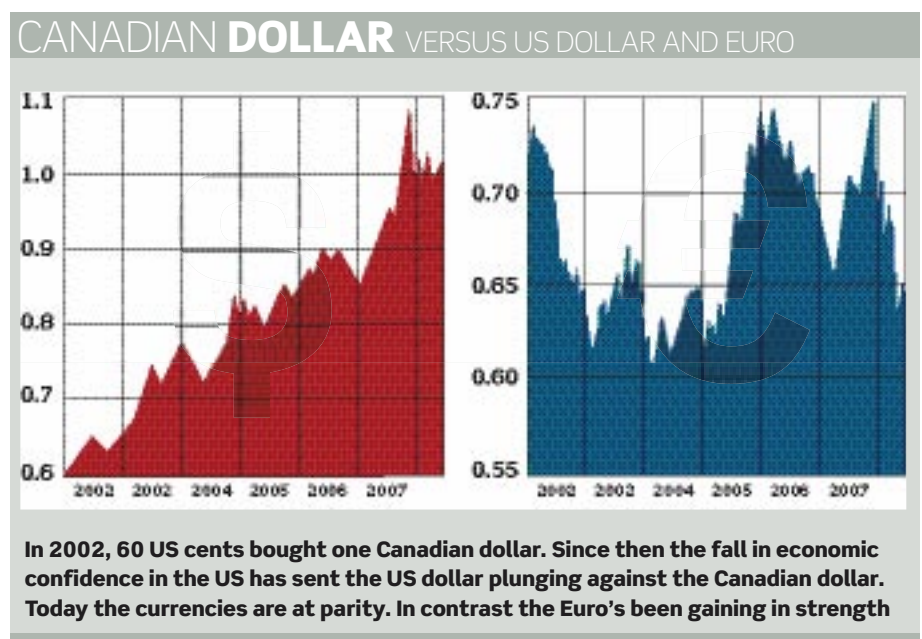
The brand names will be familiar internationally — and particularly so in the United States — but many of the companies have radically changed within the short space of just half a dozen years. For many decades British Columbia has been recognised by the international boating industry as an enclave of superyacht building expertise, with names such as Sovereign Yachts, Queenship, West Bay Sonship, Crescent Custom Yachts springing readily to mind. Yet since the beginning of the new millennium the shine that these and others once reflected has dimmed — or else taken on a different glow.

## What's gone wrong?

Paradoxically, this has happened while Canada's Pacific province has been enjoying unprecedented economic prosperity.

Most of the USA and the central and eastern provinces of Canada might now be shivering in chilly economic winds, but in British Columbia as well as in neighbouring Alberta and across the border in Washington State it's still high summer. Whereas in most of the developed world property prices have been falling this year, for example, in BC there's still an annual real estate inflation rate of 15 per cent.

So what has gone wrong for its once



dynamic hub of superyacht building?

The answer lies mainly to the south of the 49th parallel. Big yachting markets in the US, most notably Florida and California, have accounted for at least 80 per cent of the business of BC superyacht building industry, and that market, particularly in the important South Florida area, has gone flat with the adverse imbalance in trading conditions between Canada and the US that's since got steadily worse — driven first by '9/11' and then everything in its wake from bursting of the 'dotcom bubble' which saw share values in internet-dependent companies plunge to, more recently, the crisis in financial markets following the collapse in

sub-prime mortgages.

The fall in economic confidence in the US has sent the US dollar plunging against the Canadian one. "In 2002 60 US cents bought one Canadian dollar. Today, both currencies are at parity," points out Ken Roueche, the principal officer of British Columbia Yachts, an industry trade association that was formed by members of the BC industry during the 2001 Ft Lauderdale show in an effort to pull together a united front to combat what they saw even back then as a deepening crisis in the market for their industry. "Our builders used to be most focused on the South Florida market, but now we're much more interested in the market around Seattle, which



▶ **PLATINUM MARINE SERVICES** PAGE 44



▶ **RICHMOND YACHTS** PAGE 48



▶ **CRESCENT CUSTOM YACHTS** PAGE 40



▶ **RAYBURN CUSTOM YACHTS** PAGE 46

RICHMOND

MAPLE RIDGE

MISSION

SIDNEY



▶ **WATERLINE YACHTS** PAGE 50



▶ **PHILBROOK BOATYARD** PAGE 42

hasn't suffered nearly as much."

Builders of smaller superyachts have been hit the worst, and it's in this category where most BC builders fall. Jim Hawkins, vice president of the recently revitalised Crescent Custom Yachts, provides a good example of the effects of this US market stratification. Crescent was bought out in 2005 by the US-Canadian WorldSpan Marine consortium, which paired it with Queenship, the failed yard that it had acquired the year before. Crescent-branded motoryachts are built upwards of 100ft (30.5m) to a maximum so far of 142ft (43m) and Queenship yachts of 70ft-92ft (21m-28m). "Crescent yacht sales have not been very noticeably affected by the downturn in the US economy, but we've seen a significant percentage of our Queenship customers hit by it," he observes. "That's why more boats are being built here over 100ft than ever before."

The largest yacht under construction in BC at the moment is 148ft (45m) long, which when compared with the behemoths built these days by yards in the Netherlands and Germany, for example, is modest. The yacht in question is currently being moulded in FRP by

**“Our builders used to be focused on the South Florida market, but now we’re much more interested in the market around the Seattle area, which hasn’t suffered nearly as much”**

Richmond Yachts with a projected launch date sometime next summer. Richmond was started by Texan businessman Don Davis in April 2004 who bought the assets of Sovereign Yachts, one of BC's leading superyacht builders, after it had gone into receivership.

**Building on spec**

Both yards have adopted the policy of building speculatively rather than waiting for orders. While builders in other countries generally see this as a high-risk strategy that also limits the potential for customisation, both Crescent and Richmond argue that it smoothes production, keeps costs (and therefore prices) down and, best of all for potential customers, means that they don't have to wait that long for a yacht once they've decided to buy.

It's a strategy that's also being adopted by other BC builders, among them Rayburn Custom Yachts, which currently builds to 108ft (33m). Paul Rayburn admits that the going has been tough owing to the softening of the staple US market. "This has made it difficult for us to survive," he frankly admits, "but we're just small and flexible enough to ride the major market shifts, although we have to keep a close watch on our costs. For instance, we have leased out two-thirds of our production facility."

That willingness to adapt has been key to the survival of the BC industry as a whole and it's expressed in many different forms. One example is a new 100ft (31m) twin-mast 'Aerorigged' Durabo 100 aluminium performance sailing cruiser designed by

Vancouver-based naval architect Ivan Erdevicki for world circumnavigation. This project is now taking shape at the West Bay Sonship yard, formerly BC's biggest superyacht builder, that had lain dormant. The launch is scheduled for May next year.

Other yards such as Platinum Marine Services and Philbrook's Boatyard have geared their operations away from new-build and towards refit and repair, promoting the considerable boatyard skills that the industry nucleus around Vancouver undoubtedly possesses. Other builders are making far greater use of specialist contractors such as yacht furniture makers Offshore Interiors and ProNautic Custom Interiors. That, according to Richmond Yachts' Keith Kiselback, is a sea change for the industry. "The attitude used to be 'stay out of my yard'. Not any more. There's a new spirit of co-operation."

#### **Evergreen stretches to 100m**

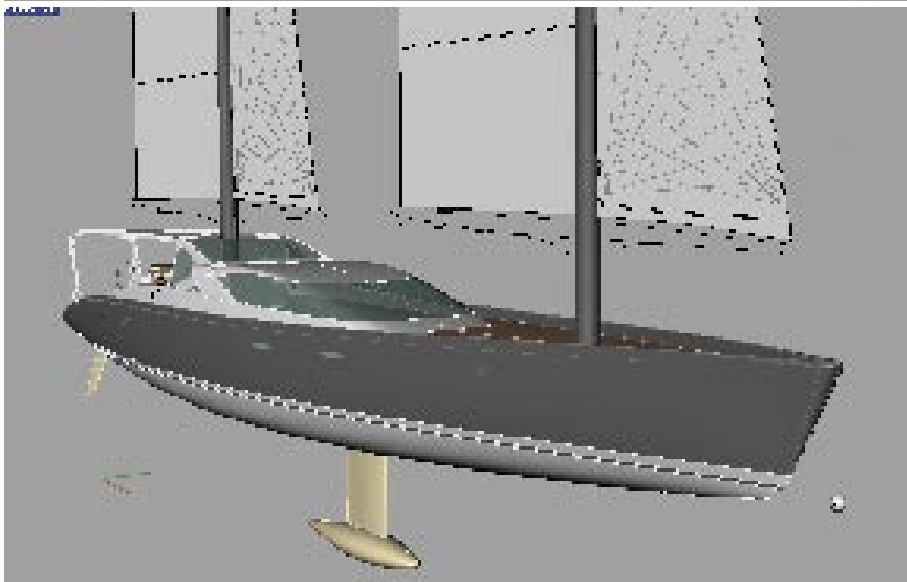
What is almost certainly the biggest yacht refit to have been undertaken in British Columbia is currently underway at the North Vancouver docks of Washington Marine Group. *Evergreen*, the 92m (302ft) five-deck megayacht designed by Glade Johnson for Evergreen shipping lines magnate Chang Yung Fa and launched from the Japanese Hayashikane yard in 1997, is to become a gigayacht. She is to be extended to exactly 100m (328ft) with new bow and stern sections to replace the originals.

This will be the fourth 'Atessa' refit to be undertaken by Washington Yachting Group on behalf of Dennis Washington, owner of the largest private containership fleet in the world, who also operates a large fleet of tugs and barges. Engineering and design behind the project is by DINMA (The Italian Department of Naval Architecture, Ocean and Environmental Engineering) and is being carried out to MCA rules and Lloyds classification. Completion is scheduled for June 2010.

When *SB* glimpsed the yacht in May she was moored up with interior work in full swing. Progress was screened from prying eyes by plastic covers that completely shrouded the yacht's mid-section. Photography was strictly prohibited; such is the secrecy surrounding the project.

However, we were able to see that the interior will have a Biedermeier-style art deco theme throughout, with each of the five decks having joinery and furniture in progressive shades from the dark woods of the lower deck to light for the top deck.

Among a host of contractors working on site during the project is marine joinery company Offshore Interiors and Platinum Marine Services, which is carrying out lamination work.



**The 'Aerorigger' Durabo 100 aluminium performance sailing cruiser designed by Vancouver-based naval architect Ivan Erdevicki. The project is now taking shape at the West Bay Sonship yard**

By July she will have been moved to dry dock where the top-secret bow and stern replacement operation will be carried.

Captain Ted McCumber, a professional yachtsman who skippered Denis Conner's famous 1982 *Stars and Stripes* in the 1982 America's Cup series, heads a team of 117 at Washington Yachting Group. He said: "Our plan is to start a multiple rebuild yard. We now getting calls at the rate of one every two weeks enquiring about major refits. We've got at another gigayacht refit on the horizon after this one."

#### **Elephant on the move**

And for the future of the superyacht industry as a whole? As one member of the BC Yachts colourfully put it: "When the elephant to the

south of us rolls over, we lesser creatures need to move fast to avoid being crushed."

As Greg Marshall, head of one of BC's top yacht design groups, puts it: "The yacht building business had virtually evaporated here by about 2000. The 40 per cent growth in the value of the Canadian dollar to parity with the US dollar hurt a lot of the builders here significantly. But I am happy to see that they're starting to overcome that. We had a correction, but boatbuilders are a little more sophisticated these days. People are now working well and a lot of good things are coming out."

He concludes: "The right steps are being taken, but the industry still relies too heavily on the US. The real yacht market is all over the world, so that's where we need to be." ●

## CRESCENT CUSTOM YACHTS

1

launch in 2008  
For its order book,  
see p52

### KEY FACTS

- **Size of yard:** 14,300m<sup>2</sup> (154,000ft<sup>2</sup>)
- **Employees:** 60 direct
- **Size it can build to:** 50m (164ft)
- **Biggest it has built:** 43m (142ft)
- **Web:** www.crescentcustomyachts.com
- **Contact:** Jim Hawkins, VP operations

Two revivals in one is a fitting summary for today's Crescent Custom Yachts. Having bought from the receivers the Queenship yard with its modern 6,000m<sup>2</sup> (64,000ft<sup>2</sup>) plant and Fraser River frontage in 2004, WorldSpan Marine, a US-Canadian business consortium, purchased the ailing Crescent Custom Yachts soon after and relocated it under the same roof. The two brand identities have been retained and both are now starting to gain momentum.



### YARD OVERVIEW

#### RIISING FROM THE ASHES

Ten years before the early 2000s decline in British Columbia's superyacht building industry, Queenship and Crescent Custom Yachts had been among the region's brightest names. At its yard on the Fraser River at Maple Ridge, about 55km east of central Vancouver, Queenship had been building custom and semi-custom motoryachts in the 18m-30m (60ft-100ft) range. At the same time, working out of the yard in Richmond, since occupied by Platinum Marine Services, Crescent was building motoryachts up to 37m (120ft).

Then, around 2002 as the economic tremors caused by the collapse of dotcom shares, the gathering strength of the Canadian dollar compared with its US counterpart, and growing competition in the big-yacht market, both Queenship and Crescent began to struggle to compete for sales in the vital US market. Queenship

succumbed to be bought out by investment group WorldSpan Marine in 2004, while a practically moribund Crescent was sold the following year to the group by owner Jack Charles.

#### ACTIVITY TODAY

The two businesses were able to slot into the large, well-equipped recently constructed premises of Queenship.

Today's Crescent's range is based on the 30m (100ft) Jack Sarin-designed Crescent hull which is expandable for designs up to 43m (142ft), while new Queenships are available from 21m-27m (70ft-90ft) based on two hulls — the larger drawn by Sarin's neighbour in Washington State, USA, Howard Apollonio, and the smaller by Greg Marshall of Vancouver Island.

When *SB* visited the yard in May it had recently launched a planing 21m (70ft) Queenship and was fitting out a 22m (73ft)

Queenship with Ron Holland styling for a delivery date in February next year.

#### PLANS FOR TOMORROW

A 43m (142ft) Crescent hull moulding was being laminated by Platinum Marine Services, a subcontractor that the yard regards as a strategic partner. The 142 hull will be the platform for a 24kt tri-deck and will have superstructure and interior by Ron Holland. Already sold, it is due to launch in March 2010. The yard is speaking with Holland about second and third 142.

The yard is prepared to start builds speculatively. "Having projects on the go helps smooth production and allows us to use our workers more efficiently," says vice-president operations, Jim Hawkins.

Looking ahead, Hawkins says: "We would prefer to stay under 50m (164ft). We see a good niche for us in that area for the next three to five years."

"We're organising our business on the European model, using subcontractors to leverage the high boatbuilding skill base we have here."

Vice-president operations  
Jim Hawkins

### ONE TO WATCH

- **Model:** 142 tri-deck
- **Designer:** Ron Holland
- **Length:** 43m (142ft)
- **Top speed:** 24kt
- **Power:** 2xMTU 12V 4000M90 at 2,735hp each
- **Price:** US\$20 million-plus
- **Delivery date:** 2010



Crescent aims to make its niche under

164 ft

for the next three to five years



# PHILBROOK'S BOATYARD

**90**  
per cent of  
the builder's  
business is now  
refit work

## KEY FACTS

- ▶ **Size of yard:** 12,800m<sup>2</sup> (140,000ft<sup>2</sup>)
- ▶ **Employees:** 90 direct
- ▶ **Size it can haul:** 200 tonnes
- ▶ **Biggest it has built:** 21m (70ft)
- ▶ **Web:** www.philbrooks.com
- ▶ **Contact:** Drew Irwin, co-owner

Situated on Vancouver Island, Philbrook's Boatyard takes full advantage of a large local boating market and a passing trade of long-distance yachtsmen exploring one of the world's richest cruising grounds. It offers the full gamut of refit and repair services while building the occasional large yacht as well.



## YARD OVERVIEW

### OLD-FASHIONED VIRTUES

Since 1987 Drew Irwin, together with his father Harold, has owned what he succinctly describes as "a full-service yacht repair business that builds custom boats sporadically."

The Irwins are the third owners of the yard that was started in the 1950s by tradesman Eric Philbrook and retired housebuilder Ernie Butler. Without destroying the character of the yard, the Irwins have been able to draw on an accountancy background to apply some financial rigour to the yard, which is located in Sidney about 20km up the coast from Victoria, the capital of Vancouver Island.

### BRAVING TOUGH TIMES

They have had to in order to keep the business afloat. Despite the twin advantages of sitting in the middle of a substantial local boating market — there

are said to be more than 3,000 boats within four square miles of the yard — and being a convenient stopping-off point for cruising yachtsmen making extended passages from the US west coast up to Alaska, Philbrook's has had to grapple with some harsh economic realities post-9/11 and the rise in the Canadian dollar against the US one, which has seen a fall in US business.

"We have had to trim our operation accordingly," says Drew Irwin. "Not so long ago we had as many as 180 employees. Now we're down to 85-90, all of whom are directly employed."

### REFITS BEHIND REVIVAL

Even so, the company maintains an all-round capability refurbishing yachts with repowering, repainting, extending hulls and superstructures as well as designing and installing electrical systems just to name a few of its skills. Facilities include just

under 8,000m<sup>2</sup> (86,000ft<sup>2</sup>) of covered space housing lamination, mechanical, carpentry and paint shops, plus a further 4,800m<sup>2</sup> (52,000ft<sup>2</sup>) and 215m (705ft) of dock and two slips with rails, the largest able to haul out boats of up to 200 tonnes into a boat shed that can be extended to 46m (151ft).

"Some 80-90 per cent of our business is refit and repair now," Irwin says, "and we have 60 projects in progress. We may be expensive, but we do it right," he asserts.

In between, the company has also slotted in a few new-builds. The most recent of these left the yard in 2003 — the *Chinook Post*, a 65ft aluminium express cruiser with hull lines drawn by local naval architect Greg Marshall.

Looking ahead, Drew Irwin says: "We have a couple of proposals out for new-builds — a 76-footer that's a 40 per cent probability and 45-footer that's 70 per cent likely to happen."

"Some 80-90 per cent of our business is refit and repair now.

We have helped sort out a lot of people's messes over the years.

Co-owner  
Drew Irwin

## ONES TO WATCH

- ▶ **Refit work underway**
- ▶ Interior for Ocean Alexander 72
- ▶ New GRP hardtop on Northcoast 90
- ▶ Composite and finishing work on new Northern Marine 151
- ▶ Electronics upgrade on Sovereign 90



The yard has

**60**  
refit jobs  
currently  
in progress

**4**  
major  
refit projects  
currently  
underway

## PLATINUM MARINE SERVICES

### KEY FACTS:

- **Size of yard:** 4,180m<sup>2</sup> (45,000ft<sup>2</sup>)
- **Employees:** 80 direct
- **Size it can build to:** 43m (140ft)
- **Biggest it has built:** 39m (127ft)
- **Web:** www.platinummarineservices.com
- **Contact:** Dave Marsden, co-owner

No yard characterises the new spirit of adaptability in the regenerated British Columbian big-yacht building industry better than Platinum Marine Services. Operating since 2004 from waterfront premises vacated by their former employer Crescent Custom Yachts, new owners Dave Marsden and Tim Charles, now offer what is probably the most comprehensive range of moulding, construction and refit capabilities available in the region.



### YARD OVERVIEW

#### EXPANDING PORTFOLIO

Platinum Marine Services will take on practically any project, short or long-term, as far as contract building, refit, repair and management services are concerned.

It also does contract moulding, major component and systems installation, boat painting as well as boat moving, co-ordination of long-distance yacht delivery.

The company's portfolio has even been expanded to include, brokerage and new yacht sales. From its recently opened sales office at Coal Harbour marina on the waterfront of downtown Vancouver, the company represents Brazilian superyacht builder Fittipaldi Yachts in addition to offering a range of big-boat equipment. Platinum's main location, however, is on Mitchell Island in the Vancouver suburb of Richmond. It's here that Dave Marsden and Tim Charles, former employees of large-motoryacht builder Crescent Custom

Yachts, started the Platinum business in 2004 in the 4,180m<sup>2</sup> (45,000ft<sup>2</sup>) covered facility erected in 2000 and vacated by Crescent after it had temporarily ceased building yachts four years later. The five-acre waterfront site also includes docks where large yachts are refitted and hauled out as required by a 220-tonne travelift.

"Its availability was a great opportunity to start a refit and repair business, for which there is always a market," says Dave Marsden. "Our aim from the outset has been to be a 'full-circle service company'."

#### NEW-BUILDS AND REFITS

Commenting on the influence on the strong rise in the value of the Canadian dollar against the US dollar (up by 40 per cent since 2002) Marsden says: "There's no doubt that this has forced us to focus on quality of construction and high-end worth as opposed to selling on value. Fortunately,

we're well equipped to do that, and so now we're also looking on capitalising on this in the European market as well as in the US, traditionally our major export market."

When SB visited in May there was plenty of activity. On the heels of an interior and exterior redesign of the Jongert 26m (85ft) *Impossible Dream* that was completed last year, three more Dutch-built yachts were in for refurbishment/rebuild. One was the Kuijpers 29m (95ft) explorer *Maverick*. Two were Feadships — a 1957 motorsailer and a privately owned 1968 35m (115ft).

Also on the go is a 36.6m (120ft) tri-deck motoryacht that Platinum is refitting.

Platinum is building a 37m (122ft) hull as a subcontractor to the new Crescent Custom Yachts operation and is negotiating with British Columbia naval architect and designer Patrick Bray over the construction of an Explorer yacht in the 38m-41m (125ft-135ft) range.

**Parity of the Canadian and US dollars has forced us to focus on quality and high-end worth as opposed to selling on value."**



Co-owner  
Dave Marsden

### ONE TO WATCH

- **Refit:** 1968 Feadship
- **Length:** 35m (115ft)
- **Delivery:** In time for San Diego Yachtfest 2009
- **Project requirements:** Replacing propulsion system, new tanks, decks and re-painting



Plans for a  
**38m+**  
Explorer yacht  
range in the  
pipeline

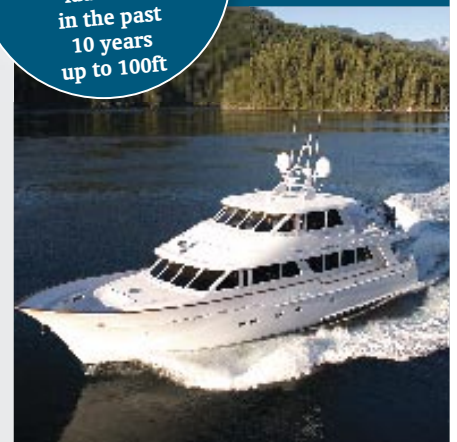
# RAYBURN CUSTOM YACHTS

**17**  
launches  
in the past  
10 years  
up to 100ft

## KEY FACTS

- **Size of yard:** 9,500m<sup>2</sup> (102,000ft<sup>2</sup>)
- **Employees:** 12 direct
- **Size it can build to:** 34m (112ft)
- **Biggest it has built:** 33m (108ft)
- **Web:** www.rayburnyachts.com
- **Contact:** Paul Rayburn, co-owner

Father and son Ron and Paul Rayburn took over FC Yachts, a small landlocked boatyard at Mission, outside Vancouver, 10 years ago. Since then they've led the building of 17 individual motoryachts on four standard semi-displacement hulls up to more than 31m (100ft) for customers who are looking for 'Rolls-Royce' quality and expect to pay for it. Now they're venturing into the displacement exploration-yacht market.



## YARD OVERVIEW

### CUSTOM POTENTIAL

With a permanent staff of 12 that's outnumbered more than 2:1 by subcontractors when they're busy working on large projects, Rayburn Custom Yachts has been completing custom and semi-custom motoryachts at an average rate of just under one and a half a year since Ron Rayburn bought FC Yacht in 1998. Originally, this yard started building boats back in 1991 and Rayburn's hull numbering system goes back to then, so that it is now working on hull numbers 23 and 24.

The yard is at Mission, in the Fraser Valley about 90km east of Vancouver, and produces a variety of craft in FRP from flybridge and tridecks to flush deck and raised pilothouse cruisers and sportfishers.

Hull 22, a 31m (100ft) pilothouse tri-deck, was delivered this spring and is the yard's most recently completed yacht.

There are two presently under

construction. Hull 23 is a 33m (108ft) motoryacht. In late May it had just been pulled from the mould with delivery of the finished project scheduled for around 18 months' time.

Hull 24 marks something of a departure for Rayburn. It's a full-custom, full-displacement 29m (95ft) explorer, designed in-house and ordered by a US customer. Unlike other Rayburns, laminated in female moulds, this one will be laid up over a specially built male tool. This is constructed on a frame of consecutive vertical steel plates cut to make a contoured profile of the new hull shape. Once the hull is complete the plates can be stacked away saving valuable workspace.

### CURRENT PRODUCTION

All current production is based on four standard and extendable semi-displacement hulls from 13m-33m

(42ft-107ft) designed by Seattle-based naval architects Hagermann and Ulberg, although each yacht has a custom-built superstructure. Interior styling is generated in-house by design director David Boudreau.

These days the company's customers are demanding ever-larger boats so that, according to Paul Rayburn, "we're now launching just one boat a year, although we are usually handling three projects at any one time. Our core business is now 80ft and up and our emphasis is on quality and custom work where we don't have much competition."

Although the company started out building only to order, since 2002 it has also been constructing semi-custom yachts on spec to smooth the production cycle and encourage customers with short lead times. Prices work at anything from C\$6 million for an on-spec 80-footer to C\$18 million for a pre-ordered top-spec 33m (108ft).

**"Our core business is now 80ft and up and our emphasis is on quality and custom work where we don't have much competition."**



Co-owner  
Paul Rayburn

## ONE TO WATCH

- **Model:** Hull 24 - Explorer
- **Length:** 29m (95ft)
- **Power:** 1xCaterpillar C32 (850hp)
- **Range:** 4,500nm at 10kt
- **Accommodation:** Four state rooms plus crew
- **Delivery date:** Late 2009



Hull 24 marks a departure — it's a full-custom

**95** ft explorer



# RICHMOND YACHTS

**18**  
months is the  
typical build time  
for a Richmond  
motoryacht

**KEY FACTS**

- ▶ **Size of yard:** 6,500m<sup>2</sup> (70,000ft<sup>2</sup>)
- ▶ **Employees:** 140
- ▶ **Size it can build to:** 50m (165ft)
- ▶ **Biggest it has built:** 43m (142ft)
- ▶ **Web:** www.richmondyachts.com
- ▶ **Contact:** Keith Kiselback, operations manager

After being salvaged four years ago from the financial ruins of Sovereign Yachts by Texas businessman and yacht owner Don Davis, FRP tri-deck superyacht builder Richmond Yachts is said to be 'going gangbusters' with the volume of work that it has in its yard. The company builds motoryachts upwards of 43m (142ft) on spec so that customers don't need to wait long to take delivery.



## YARD OVERVIEW

**SAVED FROM THE WRECKAGE**

Don Davis's 42m (138ft) *Status Quo* was still under construction when in autumn 2003 Canadian government officials seized the assets of Sovereign Yachts, one of BC's leading semi-custom builders.

Rather than see his unfinished yacht gather dust, the Texan businessman bought the yard's assets, including covered assembly area with the capacity to build four composite yachts from 37m (120ft) to more than 47m (155ft) simultaneously.

Production resumed in April 2004 under the name Richmond Yachts, with 50 of the former Sovereign workforce rehired, their first tasks being the finishing of *Status Quo* and of another 42m (138ft) tri-deck, *Keri Lee*, which was launched in 2005. Since then two more yachts have been completed, while a fifth, *Richmond Lady*, is due to be launched in August this year — all are 142s. Meanwhile lamination work had

started on a sixth hull, a 45m (148ft), due for launch in summer 2009.

**GOING 'GANGBUSTERS'**

To cope with the new workload Richmond's workforce has been increased to 140. Unlike most of the rejuvenated BC superyacht building industry, this yard prefers to go-it-alone rather than use subcontractors. Virtually everything from naval architecture to steelwork and painting is handled in-house.

"We're going 'gangbusters'," operations manager Keith Kiselback told *SB*. Kiselback says "There are plenty of people out there looking for big boats." He explains the business plan "is to build semi-production tri-deck FRP motoryachts from 140ft-165ft and sell them at Ft Lauderdale, Miami and Palm Beach boat shows. We build on spec and pay for the whole boat up front. We don't actively pre-sell boats. If customers

want to customise our interiors they need to pay ahead."

Most customers for Richmond are US citizens, although the yard is hoping to build up a more international customer base.

The Richmond Yachts sales proposition is quality superyachts built to ABS class rules and MCA standards that can be bought virtually 'off-the-shelf' at a price that remains attractive to US customers despite the rise in the Canadian dollar.

Because customisation is limited, the yachts can be turned out relatively quickly and cost-effectively. "Typically our build times are 18 months," Kiselback says.

On the horizon is a long-range bulbous-bow displacement yacht of 50m (165ft), due for sale by the end of next year. Kiselback says that the company intends to keep to its market niche and not compete in the 49m-61m (160ft-200ft) territory of larger US yards such as Trinity Yachts.

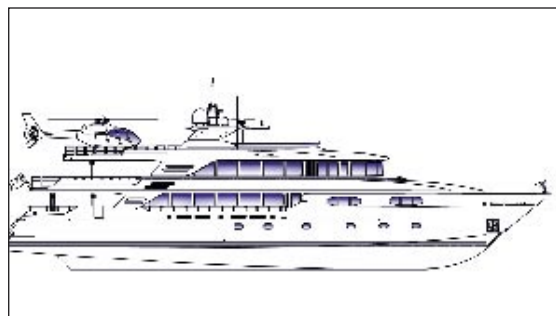
"We're going 'gangbusters'. There are still plenty of people out there looking for big yachts."



Operations manager  
Keith Kiselback

**ONE TO WATCH**

- ▶ **Model:** Hull 6 - Tri-deck
- ▶ **Length:** 45m (148ft)
- ▶ **Power:** 2xMTU 16V2000 diesels
- ▶ **Fuel capacity:** 11,400gal
- ▶ **Top speed:** 19.5kt
- ▶ **Price:** US\$28 million-plus
- ▶ **Delivery:** Summer 2009



The work-force has had to be increased to **140** to cope with demand



## WATERLINE YACHTS

# 90

footer  
on the  
drawing  
board

### KEY FACTS

- **Size of yard:** 1,300m<sup>2</sup> (14,000ft<sup>2</sup>)
- **Employees:** 12 direct
- **Size it can build to:** 27m (90ft)
- **Biggest it has built:** 21m (70ft)
- **Web:** www.waterline-yachts.com
- **Contact:** Maarten Kooijman, owner

British Columbia's only builder of semi-custom bluewater sailing cruisers is owned by a Dutchman, Maarten Kooijman. It's managed by him and his business partner Mark Tiessen. They bring a European urgency to boatbuilding that also imbues the other business that they jointly own and run ProNautic, a joinery company that makes custom furniture for superyachts. Both are located close to the Victoria International Airport on Vancouver Island.



### YARD OVERVIEW

#### LOOKING TO GO BIGGER

Owing to the high tidal range and strong currents in the waters around the BC coast, sailboats aren't always a dependable option. So power rules. The steel sloops built by Waterline Yachts, however, are not intended for island hopping, but for long-haul ocean and coastal passagemaking.

The company was founded by yacht designer Ed Rutherford in 1982 to build yachts in steel, but was bought from him by Kooijman, a former Feadship employee, three years ago. Rutherford remains actively involved in the company.

In the 26 years since the first Waterline was constructed, it has built 38 yachts, the largest being *Celesteel* at 20m (67ft). It has also built a few steel trawler yachts in its time. Its mainstay, however, remains Solent-rig double-headsail sloops, which are offered from 12.8m-16.8m (42ft-55ft).

"We have drawings for a 90-footer," says

Kooijman, "and could certainly build to that size if a customer wanted it."

He adds: "Our boats are tailored for this coast, although we see them appealing to European clients also. With our five-acre site we certainly have plenty of scope to expand this business."

In the meantime, the dozen or so employed in the yard's 1,300m<sup>2</sup> (14,000ft<sup>2</sup>) construction hall are building at the rate of one yacht a year.

#### SUPERYACHT SUB ASSEMBLIES

When she's ready she'll be fitted out with pre-finished interior furniture custom built a few hundred metres away at Maarten Kooijman's other company, ProNautic Custom Yacht Interiors. This will be one of ProNautic's smallest jobs, although its 12-person team plus CAD drawing subcontractors based in Kansas, USA, has produced furniture sub-assemblies for

yachts of up to 115m (376ft).

When *SB* visited the workshop in May, ProNautic was busy making six sets of furniture sub-assemblies for six series-built 26m (85ft) pilothouse FRP yachts for Pacific Mariner of Seattle. This was a follow-on from 22 sets that had already been delivered for a production run of 50 of the 85-footers.

On the full-custom side, the joinery company was also building furniture for a one-off 39m (127ft) sportsfisher being built by Townsend Bay Marine, just inside the Canada-US border on the US side.

"With ProNautic and Waterline we are trying not to tie ourselves to the US market alone," Kooijman says. "We believe that with Waterline we can compete with (UK luxury sailing cruiser builder) Oyster, say, in international markets. Our boats are similar in design and in price. But, being steel, they are also very tough."

"We have drawings for a 90-footer... And could build to that size if a customer wanted one... With the five-acre site we have, we have plenty of scope to expand..."

Owner  
Maarten Kooijman

### ONES TO WATCH

#### ► ProNautic jobs:

Furniture sub-assemblies for six 85ft Pacific Mariner motoryachts

#### ► In the pipeline:

Furniture for one-off 127ft sportsfisher for Townsend Bay Marine



The custom joinery company is building furniture for a **39m** sportsfisher

# Deliveries/order books

## ► CRESENT

### Order Book

Name	Length	Type	Designer	Launch
-	73ft	Motor	Ron Holland	2009
-	142ft	Motor	Ron Holland	2010

## ► RICHMOND

### Yachts delivered since 2004 & Order Book

Status Quo	Length	Motor	Designer	Launch
Status Quo	138ft	Motor	Ward Setzer/Richmond	2004
Keri Lee	138ft	Motor	Ward Setzer/Richmond	2004
Sun Chaser	142ft	Motor	Ward Setzer/Richmond	2005

Status Quo 2	Length	Motor	Designer	Launch
Status Quo 2	142ft	Motor	Ward Setzer/Richmond	2007
Richmond	142ft	Motor	Ward Setzer/Richmond	2008
Richmond	148ft	Motor	Richmond	2009
Richmond	165ft	Motor	Richmond	2009

## ► RAYBURN

### Order Book

Name	Length	Type	Designer	Launch
Hull 22	100ft	Motor	Rayburn	2008
Hull 23	108ft	Motor	Rayburn	2009
Hull 24	95ft	Motor	Rayburn	Undisclosed

## ADDRESS BOOK

### YACHT BUILDERS

- **Yard:** Crescent Custom Yachts  
(Crescent and Queenship motoryachts in GRP. Maple Ridge, BC)
- **Tel:** +1 604 462 1388
- **Contact:** Jim Hawkins, VP Operations
- **E-mail:** jhawkins@crescentcustomyachts.com
- **Web:** www.crescentcustomyachts.com

- **Yard:** Rayburn Custom Yachts  
(Motoryachts in GRP. Mission, BC)
- **Tel:** +1 604 820 9153
- **Contact:** Paul Rayburn, president
- **E-mail:** paul@rayburnyachts.com
- **Web:** www.rayburnyachts.com

- **Yard:** Richmond Yachts  
(Motoryachts in GRP. Richmond, BC)
- **Tel:** +1 604 520 1270
- **Contact:** Keith Kiselback, VP Operations
- **E-mail:** kkiselback@richmond-yachts.com
- **Web:** www.richmond-yachts.com

- **Yard:** Waterline Yachts  
(Steel bluewater sailing yachts. Sidney, Vancouver Island, BC)
- **Tel:** +1 250 655 6388
- **Contact:** Maarten Kooijman, co-owner
- **E-mail:** maarten@pronauticyachts.com
- **Web:** www.waterline-yachts.com

### YACHT BUILDING AND REFIT

- **Yard:** Bray Yacht Design and Research  
(Naval architecture, project management,

interior design and marine consultancy. White Rock, BC)

- **Tel:** +1 604 531 8569
- **Contact:** Patrick Bray, naval architect
- **E-mail:** pat@brayyacht-design.bc.ca
- **Web:** www.brayyacht-design.bc.ca

- **Yard:** Offshore Interiors  
(Yacht joinery. Abbotsford, BC)
- **Tel:** +1 604 309 4995
- **Contact:** Robert Ruzzi, president
- **E-mail:** mail@offshoreinteriors.ca
- **Web:** www.offshoreinteriors.ca

- **Yard:** Philbrook's Boatyard  
(Occasional builder, extensive refit work. Sidney, Vancouver Island, BC)
- **Tel:** +1 250 656 1157
- **Contact:** Drew Irwin, co-owner
- **E-mail:** drew@philbrooks.com
- **Web:** www.philbrooks.com

- **Yard:** Platinum Marine Services  
(Superyacht refitter, yacht sales and brokerage services. Richmond, Vancouver, BC)
- **Tel:** +1 604 325 6920
- **Contact:** Dave Marsden, operations manager
- **E-mail:** dmarsden@platinummarine-services.com
- **Web:** www.platinummarineservices.com

- **Yard:** ProNautic  
(Custom yacht interiors. Sidney, Vancouver Island, BC)
- **Tel:** +1 250 655 6388
- **Contact:** Maarten Kooijman, owner

- **E-mail:** maarten@pronauticyachts.com
- **Web:** www.pronauticyachts.com

- **Yard:** Teak Marine  
(Teak decking, interior flooring, tables, gratings and swim platforms. Surrey, BC)
- **Tel:** +1 604 542 6419
- **Contact:** Paul Tufts, president
- **E-mail:** paul@teakmarine.com
- **Web:** www.teakmarine.com

### YACHT DESIGNERS

- **Studio:** Gregory C Marshall Naval Architect  
(Designer of international luxury yachts. Victoria, BC)
- **Tel:** +1 250 388 9995
- **Contact:** Greg Marshall, principal
- **E-mail:** greg@gregmarshall-design.com
- **Web:** www.gregmarshall-design.com

- **Studio:** Ivan Erdevicki  
(Naval architecture and yacht design. Vancouver, BC)
- **Tel:** +1 604 879 0363
- **Contact:** Ivan Erdevicki, president
- **E-mail:** ivan@ivanerdevicki.com
- **Web:** www.ivanerdevicki.com

### INDUSTRY BODY

- **Association:** British Columbia Yachts, Canada
- **Tel:** +1 250 384 7606
- **Contact:** Ken Roueche, secretary-general
- **E-mail:** info@britishcolumbiayachts.com
- **Web:** www.britishcolumbiayachts.com