

FASTBOATS.COM

Randy Sweers accelerates into the fast lane via finesse and style at his new state-of-the-art Fastboats.com facility.

PAIRING LUXURY WITH PERFORMANCE

Story by Bobbye Kenyon / Photos by John Kenyon



Full line up of Donzi's.



2011 Italian designed Sessa.

Fastboats.com's exclusive inventory includes a full line of Donzi's and a Italian designer/manufacturer Sessa Marine along with MTI and Nor-Tech to name a few.

Randy Sweers is a go fast guy who has parlayed his passion for fast boats into a high performance mainstay in the marine industry. Whether you

log onto the website or motor up to his new South Florida facility via boat or car, Sweers has branded Fastboats.com into a performance icon in record-breaking time.

Canadian born, Randy Sweers began his boating career during his college days at Wilfred Laurier University in Toronto when he set up dealerships for International Marine Corporation, a company owned by a friend's dad. And while periodically visiting South Florida, Randy would bring boats back to potential buyers in Canada.

Armed with a masters degree in business, Randy Sweers made his permanent move to Florida in the early 1990's where Richie Powers hired him to join the sales team at Champion Marine during the glamour days of Don Johnson's Team USA.

From there Randy worked briefly at Fort Apache Marina on legendary Thunderboat Row and then moved on to form his own brokerage business. And the rest is history.

His love of fast boats moved him onto the early stages of the poker run scene and eventually lured him into the offshore racing arena where he competed in P Class and Super Cat. Although his office walls are decorated with multiple awards, Randy says his most memorable racing moment was during the revised Miami-Bimini run a few years ago. "I was coming back from Bimini and there were no other boats around. Then, here comes this old Formula boat (known as "The Cigarette"). The guys were wearing the old life jackets and old style racing helmets. It was like stepping back in time."

Despite the recent turbulent economic seas, as President/Owner of Fastboats.com, Randy made a bold move that afforded the company an exceptional opportunity. "Our

goal has always been to get on the water," he explained. "We wanted an area with great exposure and foot traffic. Then the opportunity arose to form a strategic alliance with Aqua Marine Partners." It took nearly seven months to complete and as is the case with any construction project, it came with its fair share of challenges. "It was trying," he reflected. "We were working out of a double wide trailer, but still conducting business."

The impressive 7,000 square foot facility located in Pompano Beach, Florida was officially launched this past February as local dignitaries and members of the marine industry toured the property. The new Fastboats.com home at 1490 North Federal Highway is conveniently situated on the 14th Street canal (south of Copans Road) minutes from the Hillsboro Inlet with no fixed bridges for fast access to the Atlantic Ocean. Located within the Aquamarina Hidden Harbour complex, it features a



Randy Sweers welcomed everyone at his Grand opening.





Randy closing the deal.

newly constructed hurricane proof storage facility that houses 350 dry storage racks. A 35-ton travel lift and on-site 93 octane (non-ethanol) fuel offers clients a stress-free boating experience. "We have brought a lot to the table as well including an exclusive service and parts center," Randy said.

The floor-to-ceiling sales showroom is best described as a performance alley that boasts a stunning display of high octane

machines including super charged engines, motorcycles, cars and of course, fast boats. Elaborating on the power-packed atmosphere are the familiar Got Speed? and Luxury Meets Performance statements displayed in huge bold black letters just above the windows. "We're trying to parlay this into something I love," Randy said. "I get that from my father...he's been a motor-head all his life."

The Parts and Service Department offers a range of services from fine-tuning to a complete refit, while Fastboats.com provides customers the convenience of scheduling boat service thru their website. "We want to create an environment that keeps people coming back," Randy explained. We want to make the whole experience...service, boating...as easy as possible for the client."

Randy isn't one to idle in gear. In addition to his performance driven business and poker run schedules, he plans to return to offshore racing aboard a new hi-tech 40' MTI powered by twin Mercury 525's and outfitted with the latest safety equipment to compete in Super Cat Light. He has a three year commitment with driver Danilo Zampaloni that spans the SBI, OSS and OPA circuits beginning this season. "It's a love of mine and now I'm getting back into it," Sweers said. "We've got something built that is very competitive, yet safe. I'm looking forward to having a lot of fun."

Randy and wife, Kim, compliment each other's business finesse, providing another ingredient to their multi-faceted success story. "She is very good at managing people, while I am a sales person," Randy explained. "This gives me more time to sell boats and do what we need



Randy and Kim at their open house.

to survive." As Vice President, Kim manages everything related to sales, accounting, banking, human resources and oversees a part-time staff.

This high powered couple has put together an experienced and versatile team that displays their same commitment to the business. "We want people that work for us to care about what they do," Randy said. "They go the extra mile. Those are the things that really make a difference."

Service Manager Andrew Howard, a fellow Canadian whose family hails from the marina business, has been on staff for five years. George Pollo, a veteran in the rigging industry brings a wealth of experience to the company and oversees the race boat project, while Mike Charlebois worked his way up the ranks from a part-time employee to Parts Manager. And hiring grads from the Marine Mechanics Institute in Orlando has been a win-win for everyone including present employees Adam Guin and Corey Willis. "We have had a good experience with it," Randy said. "It's a learning experience for them and Andrew is good at mentoring."

While Randy Sweers is best known for acquiring an extraordinary inventory of performance boats -- Donzi, MTI and Nor-Tech to name a few, he has recently added an exciting new line to the Fastboats.com stable by bringing on board models from Italian designer/manufacturer Sessa Marine. Its distinctive collection of cruisers and sport boats range from 28 to 65 footers, blending luxury and performance with a European flair. "We wanted to expand our horizons and this opportunity came up," Randy said. "These boats have great styling...the same fit and finish of a mega yacht."

Randy believes that the Key Largo 36' cabin model will grab the attention of customers who want the 'power of style' in their boating experience. "I think we will do well with the Key Largo 36," he explained. "It's the Italian version of the Intrepid. "It's great for entertaining, runs about 58 mph...it's like a Maserati of the water." Kim equally shares his enthusiasm for this dynamic import. "It's a young, fresh look," she said. "It's a true luxury fish boat."

While other companies throughout the marine industry have closed their doors during this turbulent economic climate, Fastboats.com has weathered the storm by making necessary adjustments to its business course. "We saw the writ-



Randy and Kim with the Chamber of Commerce cut the ribbon to officially open the new facility.



Lot's of activity at the new showroom.

ing on the wall back in April 2008," Kim said. "We made the changes quickly to our bottom line and changing our business model really saved us." Randy alluded to the mega efforts it took to maintain their position in the industry. "We did what it takes to keep the doors open...I have a lot of people depending on us."

Even though Randy keeps a fast-paced schedule, he's quick to admit that there's still plenty of quality, family time. His four year old son, Chase is already captivated

with all things speed. "We take a ride on my Vespa and get ice cream down at the beach. And he loves sitting in my lap when we're out in the boat."

When asked where he sees himself five years from now, Sweers paused for just a moment. "Although the last couple of years in the boat business has changed my retirement plans, I would like to own a marina facility someday," he said. "I will always be in the boat business. I think I'm what you call a lifer. I enjoy what I do." ❁