



# STARTING FROM SCRATCH

## 3 TIPS FOR NAVIGATING THE NEW BUILD PROCESS AT TOP YACHT MANUFACTURERS

A RELATIVELY SMALL MINORITY of people gain the means and opportunity to begin a new boat build with a world-class yacht builder each year. As such, it's no surprise that for an unprepared buyer, the process can be rife with challenges and unfortunate surprises. This is why Bluewater sales professionals pride themselves in expertly handling these challenges for retail customers with around-the-clock advice, service and expertise throughout the new construction process.

A "from-scratch" new build often starts with a broker walking a boat show with the buyer, getting to know his goals and feature requests, and helping pin down a list of accommodations. The next step is often a trip to the factory to learn first-hand about the construction process, meet

with the management or design team and ultimately get started on fulfilling the contract.

**1 KNOW YOUR DEADLINES** From the outset, it is the sales professional's job to relay information between the customer and builder in an effort to keep the project on schedule, avoid costly setbacks and exceed expectations. As Virginia based salesman Jud Black explains, helping owners understand their deadlines for certain decisions and options is a top priority. "In many cases, at busy production plants like Viking and Princess, fixtures such as cabinetry and bulkheads are often started months ahead of the hull," Black adds. "If an owner wants to make certain changes to the layout or even just the finish, those requests need to be relayed earlier in the process than

*Considering a builder's commitment to customer service should always come first.*





Attending several boat shows and touring friends' boats can be great ways to collect as many new ideas possible

a custom boat is that it's yours—you get to be part of the creation and there won't ever be another just like it."

Riggs identifies the most important first step as identifying exactly how the boat will be used, so it can be designed to best fit your personal needs. However, that doesn't mean he encourages customers to get carried away. "It is also



options, and collaborate on ideas. In Riggs' case, he is currently managing an ambitious 90' sportfish project for a customer which has him visiting Jarrett Bay's Beaufort facility and providing updates on a weekly basis! They've even gone through the process of installing remote cameras so owners can monitor progress at any time.. Of course geography plays a role on the time lines and decision making process as well. In the case of Princess and Grand Banks, visits take more coordination and planning to their respective United Kingdom and Singapore plants, but it certainly doesn't rule them out. Bluewater management, salesmen and customers have all greatly enjoyed these overseas excursions over the years, and often parlayed them into sight seeing holidays.

you might think." At a custom builder, a regimented initial plan and options list is even more crucial to keeping the build and final delivery in budget and on schedule.

## 2 CAREFULLY WEIGH OPTIONS

Generally speaking, Bluewater's smaller production models such as Regulator and Back Cove are simpler boats with less available options for customization. But as the boat sizes grow, so do the possibilities along with a builder's willingness to provide more options to the marketplace. Once you arrive at a highly experienced one-off custom builder like Jarrett Bay, the possibilities expand exponentially—like a young galaxy at light speed—the trick is to not get too starry eyed. Bluewater's John D Riggs of Wrightsville Beach, NC has filled the role of liaison between clients and a number of custom builders over the years and says, "The great thing about building

important for us to think about resale while in the design process with an owner. Most guys are not going to own the boat forever, so the layout and systems shouldn't be so over-the-top unique that there may be some trouble marketing it to prospective buyers down the road."

## 3 GET UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

One of the constants across all of Bluewater's new boat brands is the integral role that frequent visits to the factory floor play. Again, the boat size naturally plays a role in determining the duration of a build and consequently how many trips an owner, captain or broker can feasibly take to the factory, but their presence and collaboration is welcomed at any time. Black explains that it is not uncommon for an owner or captain to take as many as five or more trips to the Viking Yachts factory over the course of a year to catch up on progress, identify



build and consequently how many trips an owner, captain or broker can feasibly take to the factory, but their presence and collaboration is welcomed at any time. Black explains that it is

Finally, as in all of the yachting industry, service is always paramount. Riggs explains that a builder's service capabilities and accountability should always be considered by the buyer before the sale. Black closes, "Ultimately, all the builders Bluewater deals with day in and day out, are top-quality manufacturers who understand it's all about the end-customer. Without them, none of us would be here, so everyone at Bluewater and throughout all of our new boat brands are more than willing to go the extra mile." 🇺🇸

*The best design teams always appreciate gathering first-hand input on a customer's individual boating style.*

