



FRESH OFF THE BOAT

Boat owners pledge allegiance to their vessel by wearing clothing emblazoned with its maker's name and logo, often turning to the Internet or local dealers to suit up. While Beaufort-based Jarrett Bay Boatworks sells its branded clothing in the traditional ways, it's charting a new course with its latest Raleigh retail store. The idea is to catch image-conscious shoppers willing to shell out \$74 for a polo shirt or \$30 for a cap, though they may not have the \$3 million to \$4 million needed to buy a custom Jarrett Bay offshore-fishing boat.

About 30 years ago, Jarrett Bay President Randy Ramsey opted for a captain's license instead of a college degree. "I wanted to run a charter boat," he says. Needing a second income, he worked in boatyards between trips. Ramsey, who grew up in Harkers Island in Carteret County, used his new skills, along with help from friends, to build his own boat. Two fellow captains requested custom boats, and his business was underway. The company now builds about three boats a year and offers marine-repair and real-estate development services, employing about 175.

Clothing was always part of the plan. "We started doing T-shirts for the boat owners and crews," Ramsey says. Demand for apparel grew, so he opened a Beaufort store about 20 years ago. Clothing is designed in North Carolina and manufactured in Los Angeles.



Beaufort-based boat builder Jarrett Bay opened a retail clothing store for landlubbers at Raleigh's North Hills in November.

Jarrett Bay entered Raleigh with a Crabtree Valley Mall store in November 2014, then moved to a 1,218-square-foot location at nearby mixed-use development North Hills late last year. Raleigh-based HagerSmith Design PA designed the store, which uses rustic wood, whitewashed cabinets and a scale replica of a 71-foot hull to reinforce the company's brand — a luxurious coastal life — with shoppers. Revenue from Jarrett Bay clothing, including supplying apparel to stores in the Carolinas and Florida, reached \$1 million in 2015, Ramsey says.

Pride in North Carolina and a preference for homegrown products are propelling the business, he says. Ramsey shares that pride and gives back to the state he says has given much to him. An N.C. State University trustee since 2009, he and his wife, Tiffany, have made the largest gifts to date to the university's equine sports medicine program.