

HISTORY IN THE

MAKING

THE JARRETT BAY 90 OFFERS A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE OF SPORTFISHING BOATS.
BY DANIEL HARDING JR.





PEPPER ALLOR



The sun is just rising over the horizon, the Bahamian air is damp and heavy. I walk down the bustling dock of the Abaco Beach Resort with my colleagues, Digital Director John Turner and Editor-in-Chief of *Anglers Journal* Bill Sisson. Crews are busy prepping baits and boats for day one of the Custom Boat Shootout. A 30-knot breeze has been building for days, kicking up sporty 6- to 8-foot seas with plenty of 10- to 12-footers thrown into the mix.

“It’s good to be going out on the biggest boat in the fleet,” offered Sisson, to which we both mumbled in agreement.

We meet the owner of the new Jarrett Bay 90, *Jaurco* (pronounced ha-ruh-ko), in the cockpit. Wondering what time we’ll be departing I ask, “What’s the plan for this morning?”

“Survive,” comes his not-so-comforting reply.

As the young crew hustles about I take a moment to admire the craftsmanship. *Jaurco* is stunning. There’s really no other word to describe it. Her broken sheer slopes up to a dramatically flared bow; like a southern drawl it instantly betrays her Carolina heritage. And the impeccable woodwork is a signature feature of the brand founded by Randy Ramsey, who is president of the company that employs nearly 150 craftsmen at its boatbuilding division in Beaufort, North Carolina.

Even if you didn’t know who the owner of *Jaurco* was you could immediately pick him out from the crowd. He walks through the boat with an air of confidence.

The crew of Jaruco was able to land a pair of dolphin on an otherwise slow day of fishing.

The new Jarrett Bay 90 turns heads abroad while competing in the Los Suenos Signature Billfish Series in Costa Rica.

He has a calm demeanor but speaks with excitement when talking about *Jaruco* (named for the town in Cuba where his father was born). A former heart surgeon with double degrees in medicine and engineering, he's now an entrepreneur and incredibly driven, particularly when it comes to boats and fishing.

"The goal was to make *Jaruco* totally state of the art from an engineering perspective. It's fast. But it's also strong and sturdy. A lot of people build fast boats. But they accomplish that by cutting down on the construction," he explains with a cup of coffee in hand.

To ensure his boat would be as strong as his resolve, he mandated that *Jaruco* be built to ABS specifications—something that's exceptionally rare in the sportfish world. *Jaruco* would be tested and rated to withstand 8-foot seas at 50 knots. Stop and think for a moment about the amount of force that is produced when a 150,000-pound, 90-foot boat rams head first into the ocean at that speed. Those conditions are a very real reality for *Jaruco*, which is scheduled to fish off the coast of Africa later next year.

To achieve that level of strength, as well as the owner's desire for *Jaruco* to reach 50 knots (yes, really), Jarrett Bay used advanced building materials such as titanium and carbon fiber ... a lot of carbon fiber. From the bulkheads to the rudders, from the toilets (yes, really) to the underwater foil (yes, really, but more on that in a second), *Jaruco* is filled with acres of the material.

The hull is one place where the yard was able to incorporate a few traditional Carolina boat-building materials. It's comprised of three-layers: the outer layer is Kevlar and fiberglass; the middle is cold-molded wood; and the inner layer is, you guessed it, carbon fiber.

There's more carbon fiber in the stringers and on up to the foredeck, a space so large it almost begs to host a flag football game. The bow can support the weight of a team, too; in fact, it's strengthened to double as a touch-and-go helicopter landing platform.

As we head into rough seas, with the boat's twin 2,600-hp MAN MTU 16V2000 M96Ls running at WOT, we see the boat hit close to 44 knots. But speed is deceiving on *Jaruco*; it's difficult to know how fast we're going without the help of electronics because of the boat's size. To better measure our pace, we watch the other Carolina boats falling behind in our wake while running offshore.

It seems incredible that a boat this big can run this fast. Ramsey estimates that they removed 40,000 pounds from the boat by using carbon fiber and Kevlar. But it's not a 50-knot boat. Not yet.

Jaruco was designed to be easily (relatively speaking) repowered with 3,000-hp engines if/when a manufacturer decides to build them. It's rumored



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LOA: 90'0"
Beam: 22'6"
Draft: 5'8"
Displ.: 150,700 lb.
Fuel: 4,400 gal.
Water: 400 gal.
Power: 2/2 600-hp MAN MTU
16V2000 M96L



Craftsmanship abounds in Jaruco's interior, from the mezzanine table to the salon table with a rainforest wood inlay. She's stunning, but at the end of the day she was built to fish, and fish hard.

that such engines are a couple years out. So instead of waiting for bigger engines, Jarrett Bay and the owner researched foiling technology. You know, the kind of underwater airplane wing that seemed to magically lift America's Cup boats above the water. "It's a little bit intimidating bolting a foil to the bottom of a boat you put this much work into," admits Ramsey. "But I will tell you the technology works. We put a ton of sensors all over the prototype foil and ran it through the rpm range. We could see how much lift it was producing and how much force was being pushed down on the blades."

Ramsey wasn't the only one anxious for the foiling test. So was the owner's agent/project manager John Riggs, who is on board with us. "It was nerve-racking, because no one has ever done it. You can do all the tank-testing in the world," he says. "It makes a couple of knots difference, but it's amazing to feel the engine load drop and speed pick up. You can feel the whole boat lift up. Twenty years ago if someone said we'd build a boat with a hydro-foil I'd say they were crazy."

The first foil was a 14-foot fixed unit made from aerospace aluminum and carbon fiber that was connected to the boat's hull under the master stateroom. A 2.0 version is being tested this summer. The goal is for the foil to be able to fully deploy and retract at the push of a button. That can and will be achieved, says the builder; it's only a matter of time. For the Custom Boat Shoot-out, *Jaruco* is running without a foil.

Like a protective older brother, Ramsey sits atop the mezzanine seat watching baits and overlooking the 310-square-foot cockpit that's more like a gladiator arena.

Beneath his feet is, by most accounts, the most technologically sophisticated sportfisherman ever built. It's been an impressive journey for the man who 31 years prior set out with a small team to see if they "could build a better mousetrap." They built a boat for charter fishing, and the idea for a company followed. "It just sorta went from there," says Ramsey. "We're the American dream."

Talk to Ramsey for a few minutes and it's clear that he remembers the early years of Jarrett Bay fondly. "The first boat we built was a very simple design, but even when I look back on it, very few boats were made with epoxy resins. We were already pushing ourselves. Very few boats were even painted with a two-part polyester paint when we were doing it."

Since that first model, the craftsmen at Jarrett Bay have continued to push themselves on every boat produced in the past three decades. So, when the opportunity arose to build *Jaruco*, Ramsey and his team said the project felt doable, although it was still daunting in almost every way.

"It's critically important that we challenge ourselves every day and try to build something better," he explains, his eyes still trained on the baits behind the boat. "The owner of this boat really pushed us to our limits. He pushed us to really challenge ourselves every single day."

The fishing features on the owner's must-have list for *Jaruco* were inspired by a Weaver he owned previously. "I wanted a fish-



ing machine. You'll see that in the cockpit, from the [250-gallon] fish boxes [that can hold fuel bladders for added range] to the winch to the bait trays. We wanted it to be a total fishing machine."

The owner was also inspired by a Garlington he had owned and rebuilt. He says from that boat he learned what he wanted out of *Jaruco* in terms of livability. "It had to have an interior that would make Feadship jealous," he says without a hint of sarcasm. "I think we accomplished this. If you're going to do something, do it right."

Day one of the tournament turned out to be a slow day of fishing. After nine hours we only had a few dolphin in the cooler. At 4:30 p.m. we heard the call for lines in. Racing back to the Abaco Beach Resort, with salt spray flying around the boat, I watched from the flybridge as dozens of other custom boats fell in line behind *Jaruco*. She leveled the tall seas for the fleet.

I thought about all the technology in *Jaruco*, the staggering \$20 million-plus price tag, the underwater foil, the carbon fiber toliets. Was it all too much. Or is *Jaruco* ahead of its time?

I remember another famous Carolina-built boat people thought was crazy—a white and turquoise 40-foot Hatteras sportfisherman built in 1960 named *Knit Wits*. It was the first production boat to be made with a then-revolutionary new material called fiberglass. Its owner was a driven individual who wanted a boat that was fast and strong, that could fish hard and cruise easy. That boat, which was considered ahead of its time, would go on to become one of the most instantly recognizable sportfishermen in the world, one that ushered in a new era of boat design and construction.

With its carbon fiber and foil, will *Jaruco* do the same? Only time will tell. But as her owner and Jarrett Bay know all too well, fortune favors the brave. □

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SCOTT KERRIGAN (RIGHT)