

People

Superyacht repair firm prepares for expansion

Boating Industry

Tuesday October 24, 2006

SAN DIEGO – The Marine Group of San Diego, a superyacht repair business, has named Fred Larsson director of superyacht operations and Bill Waite director of business development as it prepares to unveil a new facility, complete with a 660-ton travel lift, in December, the company reported in a recent statement.

When the \$6 million renovation project is complete, The Marine Group will be home to the largest travel lift in the United States, it said.

“We are assembling quite the ‘dream team’ in San Diego,” said Marine Group Vice President Todd Roberts.

The market for superyachts is breaking statistical records worldwide, with demand growing by an unprecedented 80 percent in the last six years, but the repair capacity for these boats is inadequate, the company commented.

Capt. Larsson brings more than 20 years of yachting industry experience with him to The Marine Group. He has spent the last five years as captain and project manager of the superyacht *Atessa*, which earned the best retrofit of the year award at the 2006 Monaco Rendezvous.

“With Captain Larsson’s experience overseeing an unbelievable project like *Atessa*, any yacht owner in the world today should feel comfortable undergoing any service repair at The Marine Group,” said Roberts. “By overseeing these same operations for The Marine Group, he is in a position to offer his personal assurances for exemplary service. He truly understands how to meet the needs and expectations of the owners and crews of the world’s most valuable boats.”

Waite will head up business development efforts for The Marine Group. The San Diego-native has actively raced sailboats of all sizes for the last 30 years, and was director of hospitality for the Stars & Stripes when his team successfully brought home the America’s Cup in 1986, according to the company.



Metropolitan Movers

November

The Marine Group of San Diego announced two additions. **Fred Larsson** is director of superyacht operations and **Bill Waite** is director of business development. Larsson brings more than 20 years of yachting industry experience. Waite has been a sailboat racer for 30 years, and was director of hospitality for the Stars & Stripes when it won the America's Cup in 1986.

SANDIEGOPEOPLE

Key Hires And Promotions

The Marine Group has named **Fred Larsson** director of super-yacht operations and **Bill Waite** director of business development. Larsson has more than 20 years of experience in the yachting industry and most recently was captain and project manager of Attessa. Most recently, Waite was director of hospitality for the Stars & Stripes.

Real Estate

By PAT BRODERICK

Onward And Upward:

The Chula Vista-based Marine Group has hired Fred Larsson as director of super-yacht operations, and Bill Waite as director of business development.

Come December, the company is preparing to unveil a \$6 million state-of-the-art facility, designed to accommodate super-sized yachts — measuring more than 100 feet long — from around the globe.

Port Cleans Up Six A-8 Anchorage Wreck Sites

Thursday, November 02, 2006

By Jack Innis

The two-week project is completed, but much work remains.

SAN DIEGO - Divers contracted by the San Diego Unified Port District recently completed a cleanup effort on approximately six major wreck sites in the 82-acre A-8 Anchorage.

They pulled up more than 100 tons of rotten wooden boat hulls, rigging and propulsion gear - yet barely put a dent in the total debris deposited on the bay bottom over more than a quarter century of the free anchorage's existence.

It was a tough and demanding two-week operation, said San Diego Vessel Assist Capt. Robert Butler. Originally contracted to remove debris from 12 wreck sites, Butler's team was forced to scale back its operations when port district overseers began to understand the complexity of some wreck sites.

"We found five different boats within that debris field: a 34-footer, a 60-footer, a 17-foot sailboat and a couple of 15-foot skiffs," Butler said.

All the wrecks comprised wooden boats that had been submerged so long they could not be raised intact. Rather, they came up in pieces. Butler logged more than 100 hours of dive time on the project. His crew of divers used 350 tanks of compressed air and wore out three-dozen pairs of gloves.

One wreck listed as a 34-foot powerboat was particularly deceiving; the 34-footer rested on a 60-footer completely buried in silt.

"I was diving (by) the 34-footer and began by winching up the twin Chevrolet gas engines with float bags," Butler said. "On a wooden boat, once you get the engines out, everything becomes a bit more buoyant. As bigger pieces came out of the water, I turned around and ran into a motor that was the size of a small SUV."

Butler attached 6,000- and 4,000-pound float bags on the motor and began to raise it from the seabed. As the motor began floating upward, they noticed the vessel's 30-foot drive shaft and propeller were still attached. Butler used the 30-foot length to estimate the size of the hidden wreck at 60 feet. Like the other wrecks, the hidden wreck had been rotting underwater so long it became unidentifiable.

"I put two and two together and figured the keel was still intact," Butler said. "I put another 6,000-pound float bag on the propeller end and lifted the whole thing at once." Butler's team couldn't hoist the mammoth engine, drive train and keel aboard their 60-foot barge, so they towed it partially submerged to Marine Group Boat Works (formerly South Bay Boatyard), where the assembly was hoisted from the water with a crane.

Boatyard manager Todd Roberts said his company's primary role in the project was to hoist debris from the barge and place it into containers. "We filled 17 dumpsters that held six tons of debris each," he said.

The material was taken to a local landfill for disposal.

But from the salvage operator's perspective, it was all grunt work.



Beyond 'Wreck'ognition - Vessel Assist in San Diego was contracted recently to remove wreckage beneath A-8 Anchorage. Originally asked by the Port of San Diego to cleanup a dozen wreck sites, the project was scaled back to half that number after the port realized the magnitude of some of the wrecks.

Photo by: courtesy of San Diego Vessel Assist



Photo by: courtesy of San Diego Vessel Assist

"We removed an unbelievable amount of debris," Butler said. "We used underwater saws to cut the timbers into manageable sizes, but most of it was brought up by hand one piece at a time."

Most of the wrecks were in 12 to 15 feet of water. The current could be strong at times, but visibility was a more limiting factor, according to Butler. The water in South San Diego Bay is generally cloudy - allowing only about 5 feet of visibility during the operation - but waterborne silt made salvage work even more difficult.

"The problem was as soon as you touch something, you have zero visibility; silt, dirt and debris immediately cloud the water," Butler said. "You'd have to start by taking items off one side of a boat, then switch over to the other side of the boat until the silt goes away, then bounce back over to the other side. I bit off a little more than I could chew on the diving part of the project."

Butler estimated his crew dived on 25 to 30 percent of the known wrecks in A-8, but the diver maintains there are probably other wrecks the port doesn't know about.

"A lot of boats sink in the dark of night, and if there's no hazardous material release (such as a telltale oil slick), there's really no way to know it's down there. We found one boat that was off a wreck site that nobody knew about. We lifted another boat off a wreck site, and when the port came down, they saw that their buoy had drifted. While they were relocating the buoy, they came across yet another wreck."

The Port District spent approximately \$70,000 to remove the debris during the two-week project, and will likely continue cleanup efforts as more funds become available.

A-8 Anchorage will close to free anchoring in 2007 as part of an 18-month phase-out. The port district spends approximately \$250,000 annually to remove sunken, abandoned or derelict vessels from the anchorage. Other A-8-related expenditures, such as arrests, citations, calls for service and environmental issues add nearly \$500,000, bringing the annual price tag to approximately \$700,000 to deal with fewer than 100 vessels. The state Department of Boating and Waterways provides approximately \$50,000 per year for such activities through grants.

The port district passed an ordinance Sept. 5 requiring a \$2,500 deposit due upon renewal of (formerly renewable) six-month permits required to anchor in A-8. The ordinance - which contained 11 additional provisions meant to toughen anchoring requirements in the bay - allows for return of the deposit at the end of tenancy as long as the port does not have to impound, tow, store or destroy the vessel.

While many remaining A-8 residents have expressed anger at losing their free long-term anchorage, some expressed support of the underwater cleanup project. Several A-8 residents volunteered to help dive on the wreck sites; Butler declined their offer citing safety concerns. He did hire one long-term A-8 resident as a deck laborer, though.

"Even though we do towing for the port district and theoretically are 'the enemy' down there, they knew we were there for a reason and there were no run-ins," Butler said. "All in all it was a positive situation and they seemed pretty cordial about it."

"Because of visibility, we kept two to three divers in the water at any one time, with instructions to keep a close eye on one another. From the surface, deck workers were instructed to alert the project managers of any prolonged period of inactivity on any diver's behalf. I instructed my guys to keep a close check on each other because of the lack of visibility. Other than numerous small cuts and nicks on hands from handling debris, there were no injuries or illnesses."

The most dangerous object recovered was a rusty rifle from aboard one of the boats. The firearm was turned over to San Diego Harbor Police.

Jack Innis

**MARINE GROUP BUILDS ITS "DREAM TEAM" TO
PREPARE FOR UPCOMING SUPERYACHT BUSINESS
EXPANSION
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The Marine Group Sets the Stage for Unveiling of

New State-of-the-Art Facility and 660-Ton Travel Lift in December

(SAN DIEGO, Nov. 13, 2006): The Marine Group of San Diego has announced two key additions to its management team - Fred Larsson as director of superyacht operations and Bill Waite as director of business development - as the company prepares to unveil a new state-of-the-art facility, complete with a 660-ton travel lift, in December. When the \$6 million renovation project is complete, The Marine Group will be home to the largest travel lift in the United States, making San Diego the destination of choice for superyachts from around the globe.

"We are assembling quite the 'dream team' in San Diego," said Marine Group Vice President Todd Roberts. "We are proud to be able to offer customers world-class service at the best location to fit their needs, right here on the West Coast."

The market for "superyachts" - the term used to describe yachts in excess of 100 feet in length - is breaking statistical records worldwide, with demand growing by an unprecedented 80 percent in the last six years. Yet, the repair capacity for these boats is simply inadequate. Owners previously took their boats to places like the Far East, Australia and Europe for repairs. Now, they can keep their boats in the United States and still enjoy the same caliber of work and service they have come to expect from the world's top yachting destinations.

Captain Larsson brings more than 20 years of yachting industry experience with him to The Marine Group. He has spent the last five years as captain and project manager of the acclaimed superyacht *Atessa*, which earned the marine industry's highest award - the best retrofit of the year award at the 2006 Monaco Rendezvous. The massive project for the *Atessa* involved complete restoration of the ship, including painting and fairing, detailing and overhauls of the mechanical and electrical systems, fine finish cabinetry work and redesign of the interior. An entire new level was added as well as 21 feet of length. The 225-foot *Atessa* is valued in excess of \$75 million.



NEWS | SAN DIEGO

Promotions and Appointments

By **CHRISTY FACTOR**, The Daily Transcript
Thursday, November 2, 2006

The Marine Group of San Diego has announced two additions to its management team. Mayor Jerry Sanders has appointed Khadija Basir and reappointed Jennifer Adams-Brooks, Tony Yip and Alice Tumminia to the San Diego Housing Commission, subject to City Council approval.

The Marine Group of San Diego has announced two additions to its management team: Fred Larsson as director of superyacht operations and Bill Waite as director of business development. Captain Larsson brings more than 20 years of yachting industry experience with him to The Marine Group. He has spent the last five years as captain and project manager of the acclaimed superyacht Attessa, which earned the marine industry's highest award -- the best retrofit of the year award at the 2006 Monaco Rendezvous. The massive project for the Attessa involved complete restoration of the ship, including painting and fairing, detailing and overhauls of the mechanical and electrical systems, fine finish cabinetry work and redesign of the interior. An entire new level was added as well as 21 feet of length. The 225-foot Attessa is valued in excess of \$75 million. Waite will head up business development efforts for The Marine Group. The San Diego native has actively raced sailboats of all sizes for the last 30 years, and was director of hospitality for the Stars & Stripes when his team successfully brought home the America's Cup in 1986.

San Diego company to unveil new US\$6 million refit facility

By IBI Magazine

The Marine Group of San Diego announced yesterday that it had hired two executives to create more business for a "state-of-the-art" refit facility in California. The company has hired Fred Larsson as director of superyacht operations and Bill Waite as director of business development. At the same time, it has made a US\$6 million renovation to its facilities, including a 660-ton travel lift, the largest in the US. It will unveil its new facilities in December.

"We are assembling quite the 'dream team' in San Diego," said Marine Group Vice President Todd Roberts in a statement. "We are proud to be able to offer customers world-class service at the best location to fit their needs, right here on the West Coast."

According to the statement the number of yachts over 100 feet launched in the last six years has increased 80 per cent. "But the repair capacity for these boats is simply inadequate," said Roberts. "Owners previously took their boats to places like the Far East, Australia and Europe for repairs. Now, they can keep their boats in the United States and still enjoy the same caliber of work and service they have come to expect from the world's top yachting destinations."

Larsson has been in the yachting industry for over 20 years. He has spent the last five years as captain and project manager of the 225-ft. *Atessa*, which earned the best retrofit of the year award at the 2006 Monaco Rendezvous. The project involved complete restoration of the ship, including painting and fairing, detailing and overhauls of the mechanical and electrical systems, fine finish cabinetry work and redesign of the interior. An entire new level was added as well as 21 feet of length. The 225-foot *Atessa* is valued at more than US\$75 million.

(14 November 2006)

ON THE WATER: BOATING

By Bill Center
STAFF WRITER

November 21, 2006

Facility to open

San Diego could soon become America's leading repair destination for that mega-dollar class of boats called "superyachts."

The Marine Group of San Diego next month will add a 660-ton travel lift – the largest in the United States – in an effort to bring repair work to San Diego that heretofore was done in the Far East, Australia and Europe.

"Superyachts" are at least 100 feet in length. Sales in the category – the cost of a 250-foot superyacht can top \$100 million – have risen 80 percent over the past six years.