

STORY JAMIE WELCH PHOTOS BILLY BLACK

GETTING IT RIGHT

RICHMOND 138'

STATUS QUO

THE RICHMOND *STATUS QUO* IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF WHAT A CUSTOM 138' GRP MOTORYACHT SHOULD BE. EXTREMELY WELL CRAFTED AND RUN BY A TOP-SHELF CAPTAIN AND CREW, *STATUS QUO* IS—IN A WORD—RELAXING.

The mahogany interior is tasteful, comfortable and well-finished

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UR SEA TRIAL WAS SO PACIFYING, IN FACT, THAT THE TRIP ALMOST PUT US TO SLEEP.

We mean that in the best possible way: the boat was quiet and comfortable, Marketing Director Deborah Carr, Captain John Steffey and his crew were excellent hosts—always one step ahead of every procedure—and our favorite parts were the leather-and-down recliners in the skylounge, possibly the most comfortable seats I've ever been on.

But the history of how Richmond Yachts—a brand new player in the 140' market—came about is not so peaceful, especially for the owner of the boat and the shipyard, Don Davis. The Texas entrepreneur had been a yacht owner for 20 years and in 1996, after he sold his food distribution company, he decided to build a 138' yacht that he could bring to Spanish Cay, his own private Bahamian island.

Specs went out to several shipyards, and Sovereign Yachts of Canada came up with the winning bid. Named *Cloud Nine* at the time, the Ward Setzer-designed, MCA-compliant tri-deck with a Pavlik Design interior went into construction late in 2001, but the yard experienced difficulty meeting the contracted launch date of mid 2003. By late 2003 it became apparent the yard would have trouble delivering the yacht at all: Sovereign Canada went

into bankruptcy late in 2003. But Davis still wanted his boat, and was nevertheless impressed with the craftspeople he had witnessed working on the 138', most notably Project Manager Keith Kiselback, who had worked tirelessly on the project. Instead of abandoning the Richmond, Canada yard, Davis bought Sovereign in 2003, retained about 70-percent of the workforce and changed the name of the facility to Richmond Yachts.

"The biggest problem with Sovereign, just like so many custom builders, was that the shipyard owners were too eager to get an order, so they ended up misguiding us about delivery dates," Davis said. "Yacht owners these days are very savvy yacht buyers who have lots of business experience and teams of lawyers—they know what they're doing when they sign a contract. It's just not good business to promise anything you're not 150-percent sure of because the owners of Sovereign had to close their doors and put a lot of talented craftsmen on the street. At Richmond we want to build better relationships with the buyers."

Shortly after acquiring Sovereign, Davis invested his own money in new woodworking equipment and fiberglass tooling for the six-acre yard. "The suc-



The huge C-shaped dinette in the well-equipped pilothouse



A bar with Sub-Zero fridge/freezer is in the guest suite vestibule



successful yards deliver boats on time,” said Project Manager Keith Kiselback, “and with wise new ownership by Don Davis we know we will be able to deliver well-crafted yachts on time and on budget.”

Moored stern-to at the face dock at the 2004 Fort Lauderdale Boat Show, *Status Quo* was an impressive introduction for Richmond Yachts and a daunting new competitor for the Pacific coast builders. Beautiful sapelle mahogany paneling, solid granite-topped bars, in-laid marble soles, a gold-leaf dining room soffit, custom art niches, and an abundance of top-shelf electronics and appliances—including seven dishwashers and 10 SubZero fridges—impressed even the most discerning show-goers.

The layout is perfect for private use or for charter. There are at least two fully stocked bars—each even has a dishwasher—on every deck. The main deck saloon has a granite-topped bar just as big as the one in the skylounge, and each has an entertainment center with 42” plasma TV. A full-beam, his-and-hers ensuite master bedroom is forward on the main deck. Designed with comfort and elegance in mind, it has an office/lounge area on the starboard side. The main deck service galley has silver automobile enamel paint, a cherry sole, lots of storage, and an electronic toe-kick door that opens to the dining room. To keep the chef agreeable, a complete entertainment sys-

tem with L.C.D. TV, DVD, CD and radio is on hand. Down below guests won’t be able to detect seams for the watertight doors, and all guest suites have beautiful marble bathrooms with whirlpool tubs, complete entertainment systems, cedar-lined hanging lockers and settees. A cold beverage is never far away with a SubZero in the guest vestibule. That oh-so-comfortable sky-lounge with a huge granite-topped bar is just as inviting and luxurious as the main deck saloon.

A complete electronics package is in the pilothouse, which is another comfortable oasis with a teak decked Portuguese bridge out front. The wheelhouse has a leather settee, custom teak chart table and Stidd captain’s chairs. Up top, an electric roof opens to an expansive teak-decked recreation area complete with a navigation station, Jacuzzi and a fully stocked bar.

The well-insulated engine room houses twin 2250 hp Caterpillar 3512 diesels, twin 99 kW Northern Lights gensets, 40-ton Aqua Air AC system, Alpha Laval fuel polishing system, two battery chargers and a ship monitoring system.

In the end Don Davis got exactly the boat he had wanted way back in 2000, and in the deal he got a promising new shipyard that currently is in the process of negotiating a contract for a new 142’ tri-deck. ■

TECHNICAL	SPECIFICATIONS	
LOA:	138’	
Beam:	28’	
Draft:	7’	
Fuel:	9200 gallons	
Water:	1800 gallons	
Engines:	2x 2250 hp Caterpillar 3512	
Top Speed:	21 knots	
Cruising Speed:	15 knots	
Range:	3000 nautical miles	

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