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LEX RAAS



PMM: Describe the state of your market in 1995 compared to what it is today. How has this affected the way you conduct business?

MMA: In the early to mid '90s, monohulls were dominant in the charter and cruising markets, while catamarans occupied only a small percentage of the space. That has all changed, thanks to the futuristic outlook of various folks in the boating industry who are focused on changing the game with multihull products designed for better livability and enjoyment on the water.

Lex Raas is the visionary behind the Leopard Cat, the multihull that during the 1990s became one of the most dominant sailing boats in the Caribbean, particularly in charter. Lex recognized that as the catamaran concept was becoming increasingly popular, so was its need for continued evolution. In 2005, there was an increased interest in power cats, but at that time the popular approach to creating a power cat was simply taking a sailing cat and converting to power.

The power catamaran game changed in 2011 when Lex applied his boat development and visionary skills to a new power catamaran concept and Aquila entered the market. Aquila, a pure-bred power catamaran unlike anything in the marketplace, has taken a practically non-existent market and turned it on its head, gaining tremendous presence in both the charter and private markets.

Now in 2015, power catamarans are becoming a force in boating, opening the market to a new user, as well as attracting the interest of longtime boaters.

PMM: What is the best decision you have made as a company that has shaped your current reality?

MMA: Partnering with the right people to bring such an innovative yacht design to market. Aquila power cats are developed by the industry's most forward-thinking experts under the collaboration of the world's leading companies to create the perfect blend of form, function and innovation. Aquila is the choice of the world's leading marine charter and boating lifestyle companies with cats built to perform reliably and repeatedly, under the most testing of conditions.

PMM: What has PassageMaker magazine's role been in the development of your business over the past two decades?

MMA: PassageMaker has been a vital player in long-range cruising in the Caribbean. While traditionally a trawler-focused publication, PassageMaker has been open to innovation and moved out of the box to a wider encompassing magazine, and very supportive of our cats.

PMM: What was the event/new product/trend that most surprised you over the past 20 years?

MMA: We are not surprised, as we predicted this power cat evolution, and that it will continue to be a growing segment in the marketplace. We are expanding the market, attracting non-boaters and not just "stealing a piece of the pie."

One of our goals with the Aquila brand has been to build power catamarans that are more practical, stable, efficient and aesthetically pleasing than what buyers have experienced in the past. We are well on our way to success—the Aquila 44 was just awarded the 2014 AIM Media Editor's Choice Award for Best Multihull 40–49 feet, and the MarineMax 484, an Aquila 48, was recently recognized as one of the Top 90 Boat Designs of All Time with a "supremely better layout" by the editors of *Power and Motoryacht Magazine*.

In the charter segment, we consistently see more new boaters enjoying the Caribbean. These boaters are very comfortable on an Aquila power cat, with her large staterooms and living areas designed into a comfortable yacht. The seaworthiness of Aquila has been well proven; the entire MarineMax Vacations Aquila charter fleet in the British Virgin Islands are delivered on their own bottoms from Florida.

PMM: What has led to your continued success in the marine industry through the years?

MMA: First, having a keen insight for creating desired innovations for the market and not simply reacting to trends. Aquila stays out ahead of the game and knows the right evolutions before boaters themselves even know what they are looking for.

Secondly, staying focused on delivering an exceptional, proven product that is backed by a customer-centric, service-dedicated team. MarineMax has a proven history for excellence in product and service, and exclusively features Aquila catamarans in their charter fleet.