

Bellingham Yachts Offers Full Service Sales, Service and Charters

BY LESLEE JAQUETTE

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BELLINGHAM YACHTS of Bellingham, Washington, is owned and operated by two unique brothers, Nick and Dean Ouilette. They are rightfully proud of their success as a unique company in a unique location that sells unique boats.

That is, the company run by these two master mariner ranks nationally among the top dealerships for two Maine-built boats: Sabreline Motor Yachts and Albin. A full-service enterprise that offers sales, service and charters, the growing company has not only survived, but thrived in the relative backwater of Bellingham. "We often rank third nationally in our sales of both Albin and Sabreline," noted Nick Ouilette. "That's pretty impressive given our location compared to some of the big East Coast dealerships."

Celebrating two decades in business, the Ouillettes have a unique background. Raised in Maine, they both graduated from the Maine

Maritime Academy and earned their USCG unlimited tonnage and horsepower ratings while serving in the Merchant Marine on supertankers. As Nick Ouilette observed, "We served with some crusty WWII vets and attended the school of hard knocks."

Tough as it was, their background and combined 15 years at sea prepared them for developing one of the finest reputations in the Northwest and West Coast. Part of the basis for their success has been the brothers' commitment to their two, new boat lines.

Back in the early 1990's, they wanted to do something different. The Ouillettes seized the opportunity when the well-established sailboat company, Sabreline, introduced its first powerboats.

"They looked like trawlers, had the layout and feel, but actually they planed and performed similarly to a Bertram or Hatteras," recalled Ouilette. "Sabreline's modified, deep-V hull cruised at 18 knots and ran at a top speed of 24 knots."

These days Bellingham Yachts sells the complete line of Sabrelines, which range from 36 to 47-feet. Ouilette reported that they have sold and are currently commissioning the first 42-footer on the West Coast.

Albin sales are also strong at the company, which occupies 900-feet of private dock space with 30 and 50 amp power, along with a floating repair shop in front of waterfront offices. Two new Albins, a 28-foot flush deck Northwest edition and a 30-foot Family Cruiser, will be exhibited at the January Seattle Boat Show at the Exhibition Center. Bellingham Yachts will simultaneously display a 48-foot, 1998 Sunnfjord Pilothouse and a new 36 Albin Fast Trawler at the Boats Afloat Show at Chandler's Cove on Lake Union.

Nick Ouilette heads the service staff, which offers a complete menu of yacht commissioning, repairs, maintenance and installations. This includes work on generators, inverters, heating systems, electronics, davits, masts, windlasses and more. Recently, Dean Ouilette's son, Matt Ouilette joined the service department to assist the company's full time shipwright Mark Enstad.

Complementing aggressive, new boat and brokerage boat sales and the full service yard, the company also operates an interesting charter boat fleet. Currently, the bareboat fleet is comprised of boats ranging in length from 28 to 48-feet. Bellingham Yachts' largest charter vessel, the 120-foot *Scorpio*, requires a skipper.

Both Nick and Dean Ouilette recently earned National Yacht Brokers certification and both look to continue growing the diverse company. Nick Ouilette described the duo as boater's first, salesmen second.

"We are honest and want to treat people the way we want to be treated," said Ouilette. "We try to act as consultants. That is, we try to match customers with the right boats."



READY TO ASSIST - Bellingham Yachts' staff includes, from left, Mark Enstad, Ken Daug, Elaina Thompson, Richard Friedman, Nick Ouilette, Matt Ouilette, and Dean Ouilette.