

Stabi-Craft Marine Limited

Adventure with Confidence

Media Release

(For immediate release)

June 2007

Honour for Stabi-Craft founder

Stabi-Craft Marine managing director Paul Adams was named a member of the NZ Order of Merit for services to business earlier this month.

It's a fitting tribute for the man who 20 years ago pioneered positive buoyancy boats, transforming New Zealand's marine industry.

Stabi-Craft, which went on to become a household name in New Zealand, was the last name standing after a process of elimination where potential company names were jotted on a scrap of paper.

From humble beginnings in a backstreet workshop, equipped with engineering nous and a commitment to sound construction, Mr Adams built the first rigid hulled aluminium pontoon boat – a Stabi-Craft 3.5 dinghy to meet the request of two paua divers who wanted a boat that combined the principles of the traditional RIB (Rigid-hulled Inflatable Boat) with the durability of marine grade aluminium alloy.

Not after he gave up his day job, and nervously signed up for a \$1000 overdraft.

Mr Adams – a “bit of a land lubber” – was new to the boating scene. But that enabled him to enter the marine industry with no preconceptions of what was right or wrong when it came to manufacturing boats.

“The original Stabis were definitely outside the square and we were able to be innovative and try new things,” he said.

The concept worked and within a year Stabi-Craft Marine had moved to larger premises on Bluff Road, exported its first shipment of five boats to British Columbia in Canada, and even had its first dealer, The Power Boat Centre in Christchurch.

In 1992, the Invercargill boats were being exported to the US and two years later debuted in Australia. The appointment of Trans Tasman Marine as distributors in 1997 sealed Stabi-Craft's place in the market.

Design innovations continued with the 550XC – the first Stabi built for family use – unveiled in 1996, followed closely by the Generation II pontoon a year later which allowed for more streamlined silhouettes for boats, increasing their appeal in the recreational market.

“The success of a product is its ability to continue evolving while still maintaining the innovation that made it stand out in the first place,” Mr Adams said.

Stabi-Craft's profile globally has been enhanced by association – organisations including the Jean-Michel Cousteau Oceanographic Institute, the United Nations and numerous rescue groups sing the company's praises.

As the name suggests, stability and safety have been the predominant aim and Stabi-Craft was one of the founding members of CPC, a voluntary code of compliance for New Zealand boat manufacturers, and the first manufacturer to sign up for the Australian Boat Builders Plate.

Named 2006 Exporter of the Year by the Southland Chamber of Commerce Export Forum, Stabi-Craft has earned an array of accolades over the years but it's the endorsement of its clients that ultimately counts the most.

"We pride ourselves on making a boat that enables our clients to embark on adventures with the confidence that, even in the worst conditions, they will get home," Mr Adams said.

In 2005, Stabi-Craft opened its new \$1.7million factory, which currently turns out 600 boats a year and employs 67 people. The team also features 16 dealers in New Zealand, 11 in Australia, four in the US and one in New Caledonia.

Mr Adams says there is always something to strive for. Future plans consist of expanding the Bluff Road site to include a full marine service centre.

"It's about a journey and sometimes you never quite know how well you are doing – if you don't keep up you get left behind," he said.

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