

Marina

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Essential reading for marina and waterfront developers, planners and operators



High end rebuild boosts City economy

Creating jobs, energising the waterfront, stimulating the local economy and creating a fully customised, environmentally friendly destination marina in one package is no mean feat.

Mix in a tight schedule and essential coordination with multiple agencies and the recipe to transform a 160-slip commercial marina into a 196-slip megayacht marina facility becomes yet more complex. Palm Harbor, the newest marina on West Palm Beach, has all these ingredients and, thanks to the vision of its owner operators and key design and equipment suppliers, officially opened for business – on schedule – in March 2010.

Fresh approach

Palm Harbor Marina, formerly known as the Old City Docks, in the city of

West Palm Beach in South Florida is conveniently located just minutes from Palm Beach Inlet and just south of the Flagler Bridge. The multi-million dollar renovation project represents the strength and commitment of the Chase family of Chase Enterprises who worked with the City of West Palm Beach in a public/private partnership. The marina officially broke ground on 27th March 2009 at a ceremony in which city officials and Chase family representatives explained the modus operandi.

"This is a \$90 million project that is going to immediately bring hundreds

of desperately needed jobs to our community and have a significant impact on the city's tax revenues," enthused West Palm Beach Mayor, Lois Frankel.

Cheryl Chase, principal of the marina owners Leisure Resorts LLC, explained: "My father had the great idea to invest in West Palm Beach many years ago when we purchased the marina. We realised over the years that we had to modify the focus of the marina as the industry changed and create something completely new and modern."

"This project is the culmination of years of planning and the realisation of our family's dream," concluded Chase Enterprises principal, Arnold Chase.

By joining forces with city officials, Leisure Resorts realised that it had an opportunity to not only get the docks it wanted for the project but also import new technology and industry – and bring related jobs – to the area. "We researched the best products available for our new marina and realised that Marinetek Group's docking system was the best for us," Cheryl Chase explained.

Although Finnish design and technology, the Marinetek docks for Palm Harbor – and for subsequent projects in the Americas and the Caribbean – are built in the USA. Marinetek North America (NA) has its headquarters in West Palm Beach itself and undertook the Palm Harbor dock building project with team assistance from two local companies, Southeast Pre-Stressed and Murphy Construction Company. Employment prospects are bright: "We're committed to staying here for the long haul," confirmed Marinetek NA's Chris Clark. "We're working harder than ever to expand our business and to increase our labour needs."



COVER STORY: PALM HARBOR MARINA

In addition to over 100 jobs created by the dock manufacturing process, hundreds more workers were needed to fill all other types of specialist service positions in a move described by Chase as the creation of an individual 'economic stimulus package'. New permanent jobs at the marina have also been created.

Designed to excel

Palm Harbor Marina is designed to exceed marina industry guidelines including state-of-the-art security, wide walkways, fairways and slip widths to accommodate new, larger megayachts. Berths are equipped with in-slip pump-out, single and three-phase power supply to meet the needs of present and future larger vessels and ever more demanding communications connections. The design also took full consideration of the hurricane-force wind conditions that occur in South Florida.

Nothing was left to chance, as Robert Nathan, senior vice president of Moffatt & Nichol – design and engineering service provider for Palm Harbor – explained: "Yacht owners have more expectations nowadays when it comes to choosing a marina, for short or long-term stays. It's almost like they bring the hotel suite and they expect to be able to 'plug in' and have access to full amenities." Nathan, who also heads up the firm's Urban Waterfronts & Marinas division, ventured further: "Marinas will have to adapt to accommodate these larger yachts."

Engineering services included preliminary master planning through to construction for the redevelopment and expansion. Master planning services covered the development of marina dock configuration alternatives based on existing physical and environmental site conditions and owner-directed slip distribution with accommodation for megayachts.



"We worked very closely with the owner to meet an expedited schedule," confirmed Gabriel Perdomo, Moffatt & Nichol's project manager for the marina. "This project required coordination with multiple agencies including the Florida Department of Transportation, US Army Corps of Engineers, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, City of West Palm Beach, Palm Beach County and the US Coast Guard." In addition, utility companies were consulted to locate and avoid submerged utility lines north of the marina.

Moffatt & Nichol provided technical engineering support during the permitting process for the marina, which included the dredging of 100,000 cubic yards between the seawall and the Intracoastal Waterway, and acquired regulatory authorisation for replacement of 1,000 feet of seawall. It also provided design services for the structural, mechanical, electrical and fuel components of the marina and produced and submitted the construction tender documents

including construction drawings and specifications. The firm also assisted the owner in evaluating proposals for the various project components and selecting contractors to perform the work and - working closely with the owner and contractors - coordinated construction support service, shop drawing reviews, and regular reviews and inspections of the production and installation of the marina components.

The firm continues to support the project and is currently involved in the permitting process to remove a 'low spot' in the intercoastal channel. "The shoal, if removed, will make the marina more accessible to vessels 120 feet and above," Perdomo explained.

Below & top left: Palm Harbor's extensive mooring facilities offer generous manoeuvring space in a straightforward layout. Above: Marinetek concrete pontoons are aesthetically pleasing.



COVER STORY: PALM HARBOR MARINA



On the dockside

Capable of hosting nearly 200 yachts of all sizes from 50-250 feet in length, Palm Harbor Marina encompasses an area approximately the size of five US city blocks and has 2.2 million pounds of concrete floating docks. "Each of these slips when filled with a yacht represents nearly \$500,000 in economic impact to the city and approximately five full-time jobs to support it," Cheryl Chase enthused. "When you do the math, the success of this marina is a powerful addition to our community."

The marina was completely custom-built by Marinetek NA from the bottom up with specially designed docks that were engineered to provide an extremely stable and safe platform in all weather conditions. All custom-engineered concrete pontoons are further reinforced with heavy-duty galvanised rebar and all gangways and finger-piers are extra wide.

Further Marinetek attention to detail includes a custom colour motif; sleek yet strengthened anchoring design; elegant cleats; a 20ft wide x 196ft long fuel dock; and top level utilities. Eaton Marina Power & Lighting supplied powder coated stainless steel custom pedestals in the marina's theme colour. Each unit features toe-lighting and a backlit palm symbol is cut into the top of each enclosure. All pedestals have slip numbers.

The marina system is completely timber-free. "By avoiding toxic-coated wood and utilising eco-friendly products, Marinetek was able to offer an environmentally conscious product," confirmed Chris Clark, who headed

up Marinetek's involvement with the project; its first in the USA. "We've engineered and designed the marina to exceed the 'Clean Marina' standards," Cheryl Chase added.

Open for business

Completed comfortably in time for the 2010 Palm Beach International Boat Show in March, Palm Harbor Marina was able to play an instrumental part in growing the 25th event by opening its slips for on-water exhibits. Subsequent to this, it has signed up many slip holders and also welcomed HMY Yacht Sales, one of the leading yacht brokers and dealers in the USA, to its facility. HMY is setting up its flagship office on the premises this summer.

Meanwhile, as the yachts move in, all services are being put to the test. And, unsurprisingly, they are extensive: full concierge; golf cart porter service;

ground transportation to local airports; private clubhouse; ship's store; free Wi-Fi; and ample parking.

The last word goes to Chris Clark. "There will really be no other marinas in the United States built like Palm Harbor Marina," he asserted. "We are so proud to have been involved with this high end project."



L to r: Father and son team – Chris and Casey Clark – of Marinetek NA with Marinetek CEO, Ilkka Seppälä.

