

# Business Pulse



**El Presidente** Capt. John May, left, discusses the extensive restoration project plans with Jim Moores of Moores Marine soon after the historic presidential yacht

and crew arrived at the Jarrett Bay Marine Industrial Park dock north of Beaufort last week for an estimated three-month restoration project. (Mark Hibbs photos)

## Historic wooden yacht arrives in Beaufort for restoration

BY MARK HIBBS  
NEWS-TIMES

**BEAUFORT** — The arrival here last week of a piece of presidential history passed without fanfare, but the 1939 luxury yacht that served eight of the past 10 commanders in chief will be here for awhile.

The 96-foot *El Presidente* arrived Oct. 6 at Moores Marine, a Florida-based company, which broke ground on an 18-acre site at Jarrett Bay Marine Industrial Park near Beaufort in 2006. The company, still operates in Riviera Beach, Fla., specializes in American wooden yacht restoration.

Renowned rock music promoter Frank Lynch, a native of Scotland now residing in Charleston, S.C., recently purchased the yacht in Chicago, Ill., where it was being chartered for private excursions. The seller's advertised asking price was about \$1.7 million for the vessel, which still bears the presidential insignia.

*El Presidente* Capt. John May said he expects to be here with his two mates for several months as Moores Marine strips away the restoration work of earlier craftsmen.

"We're going to be de-modernizing her. Mr. Lynch wants to take it back in time," Capt. May said.

The crew traveled more than 2,000 miles and through 48 locks on its journey here from Lake Michigan.

Moores Marine founder Jim Moores said Monday that the work includes undoing modifications made during earlier overhauls. The yacht was last refitted in 1996. Mr. Moores said the latest effort will take about three months of intensive work without hauling out the vessel.

"All the work at this point is going to be done in the

water," Mr. Moores said.

Mr. Moores joined Capt. May and a naval architect from Wilmington on a visit to a Marshallberg boatyard where another restorer is working on a similar Trumpy yacht, the 95-foot, 1926 *Linetta*. The three will study the cabin and other design elements for authenticity.

Trumpy yachts, which were built in the Chesapeake Bay area from the 1920s until the early 1970s, are at the center of attention for Moores Marine. The company has restored 23 of the remaining 89 Trumpy yachts. "We keep legends alive" is the company's slogan.

"We started focusing in on Trumpys about 15 to 17 years ago. They were some of the best master craftsmen in the United States," Mr. Moores said. "These are very cool pieces of American history and we're into restoring American history."

Founder John Trumpy designed the most famous Trumpy, *Sequoia*, in 1925. That vessel served eight U.S. presidents beginning with Franklin Roosevelt.

Capt. May and his crew joked that they often tell onlookers that the *El Presidente* is "the other presidential yacht." But *El Presidente* has a rich history all its own.

The vessel was originally named *Innisfail* and was commissioned by the J.M. Cudahy family of Illinois and built by the Mathis-Trumpy boatbuilding company.

During World War II, the vessel was pressed into U.S. Navy service and refitted as a coastal patrol boat at the naval shipyard in Philadelphia in May 1942.

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After decommissioning in 1947, the vessel was refurbished but remained in government service until the mid-1960s through an arrangement with the owner. The name was changed to *El Presidente* in 1965.

The yacht was used by U.S. presidents including Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon, Ford, Reagan and Clinton to entertain dignitaries and heads of state.

Mr. Moores said there are only six other similarly sized Trumpy yachts still in existence. That half-dozen includes, in addition

to the 125-foot *Sequoia* and the 95-foot *Linetta*, the 96-foot *Commodore*, the 103-foot *Freedom*, the 75-foot *Coconuts* (formerly named *Exact*) and the 95-foot *Enticer*.

Mr. Moores said the work, while specialized, is steady.

"We've got another 74-footer coming in shortly," he said. "We are one of only four companies doing Trumpy restoration work on this scale and the others are all up in Maine."