

Viking Yachts Celebrating 60 Years—and Viking 82C Yacht Debut - Megayacht News

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Considering many small businesses don't survive more than their first year, seeing Viking Yachts celebrating 60 years is pretty remarkable. The famed sportfishing builder is toasting its past while simultaneously using its anniversary to reveal a new model.

The builder got its start when [Bob Healey, Sr.](#) and his brother Bill were in the real-estate development business. Having grown up and still living in southern New Jersey, they learned about the struggles of Peterson-Viking. This small boatbuilder, in the town of New Gretna, specialized in 37-foot, wooden sportfishing and cruising boats. It happened to be next door to a marina the Healeys owned, too. The Healeys arranged to buy Peterson-Viking, changed its name to Viking Yachts, and consolidated their operations there. Bob Healey, Sr. became the chief executive, corporate lawyer, and financial chief. Bill Healey, meanwhile, headed up production.

When wood began going out of fashion in favor of fiberglass, naturally Viking Yachts adopted the material. The first fiberglass boat from the factory was the Viking 33 Convertible in 1971. Greater success soon followed. In fact, the introduction of the Viking 40 Convertible the following year led to upwards of 600 deliveries through 1988, including the modified 41 Convertible.



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While subsequent successes were many—Viking has more than 5,000 deliveries to date—not everything was easy. In fact, the federal luxury tax of 1991, on top of the recession of 1990, gutted the company. Just 80 craftspeople were under employ, significantly less than the 1,500 prior to this one-two punch. Yachting professionals who were in the industry at the time can tell stories about how Bob Healey spent two years building a grassroots campaign to get Congress to repeal the luxury tax. Healey's argument: It was a job killer. He was right, with dozens upon dozens of builders and suppliers seeing business dry up.

Thankfully, the last several years have been much brighter. Sixty years to the day that his father Bill and uncle Bob established the company, Pat Healey, Viking's current president, revealed the Viking 82C yacht. Like the yacht she replaces, the 80C, the new battlewagon should cruise at 36 knots. Additionally, just like her predecessor, she should max out at 42 knots. Furthermore, these speeds should come while she's fully laden with fuel.

With more than 5,000 boats and megayachts delivered to date, Viking Yachts is among the builders with customers who buy again and again. The Viking 82C, ready for customer sea trials in June, will surely turn heads.

Viking Yachts vikingyachts.com

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