

FOCUS - MARINE

World class boat building on NZ shores



Q-West constructs sail boats, high-speed quad-engine ferries, pleasure boats, tug boats, catamarans, mono-hulls, tri-hulls and pilot boats

Q-West Boat Builders Limited is expanding its already diverse skills in boat building through the construction of a \$3 million vessel for the New Zealand Police.

The 18.5m, twin-hulled aluminium vessel, Deodar III, is the first boat to be built within a \$12 million four-boat contract which will span the next 10 years.

Q-West Boat Builders in Wanganui is a world class boat building company, with customers located all around the world.

While the boat building yard dates back to the 1970s, Q-West in its present form started in 1998. Today Q-West employs 27 staff and constructs a wide and diverse range of alloy craft.

General manager Colin Mitchell says Q-West constructs sail boats, high-speed quad-engine ferries, pleasure boats, tug boats, catamarans, mono-hulls, tri-hulls and pilot boats. It supplies marine fabrication and engineering services to the pleasure craft, tourist operator and commercial fishing sectors.

Q-West offers a quality driven service range, including design and development, construction, repairs and

maintenance, re-fit and fit-out, shipwritting, project management, technical and service backup and marine consulting.

Colin says the New Zealand Police contract is significant for Q-West, which is contracted to supply all NZ Police maritime vessels for the next 10 years. The second boat to be built will be for New Zealand Customs, while the following boat will replace the Lady Elizabeth.

The Deodar III, a foil-assisted catamaran, fitted with 8V2000 MTU diesel engines and Hamilton Jet units with the Blue Arrow control system, contains all the latest equipment available and was designed by Teknikraft Design. Q-West has built many Teknikraft designs for many different applications such as charter fishing, passenger ferries, tourist boats and pleasure vessels.

"One of the more interesting components for us was to build the tender retrieval platform. The platform or cradle is designed to enable a 4.1m RIB to be launched and retrieved. The cradle is hydraulically operated via two single-action rams," Colin says.

"Another boat of interest we're about to start is an 18m self-righting mono-hull for Port Taranaki. That will go to the gas platform to drop crew off."

Colin is expecting to gain additional government contracts following on from the NZ Police contract and is willing to expand Q-West's Gilbert Street yard if necessary to accommodate the workload.

The facilities at Q-West are purpose built for the construction of aluminium vessels, with the company developing and obtaining specific fabrication equipment over the years. Its equipment includes: three workshops capable of fabricating vessels up to 40m; a 200 tonne capacity slipway; a modern machine shop. MIG welding of steel, stainless steel and aluminium alloys, TIG welding of stainless steel and aluminium alloys; four five-tonne overhead gantries; CAD, TQM; and test equipment for hydraulics, electronics and welding.

Q-West Boat Builders Limited

Q-West has an international client base and builds boats for customers in the United States, Bahrain, Dubai, Australia and the Pacific Islands.

"Many of our US clients would obviously prefer a more favourable exchange rate, however we work very closely with them and keep them informed of what's going on. One of the items I think that attracts them is our quality and our customers say they really enjoy working with us," Colin says.

"We're a professional company with quality systems and deliver on our promises. It's the whole package - the vessel itself and delivering the boat on time and on budget."

Q-West is enjoying strong growth with the assistance of subcontractors to help with the workload. The company runs apprenticeship programmes, with some staff members now undertaking their second apprenticeships in marine engineering.

"The biggest thing for us is our staff. We have good staff retention and a very good quality of staff who are passionate about building boats. They really enjoy the diversity of work here."

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The 18.5m, twin-hulled aluminium vessel, Deodar III, has been built by Q-West Boat Builders for the New Zealand Police

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