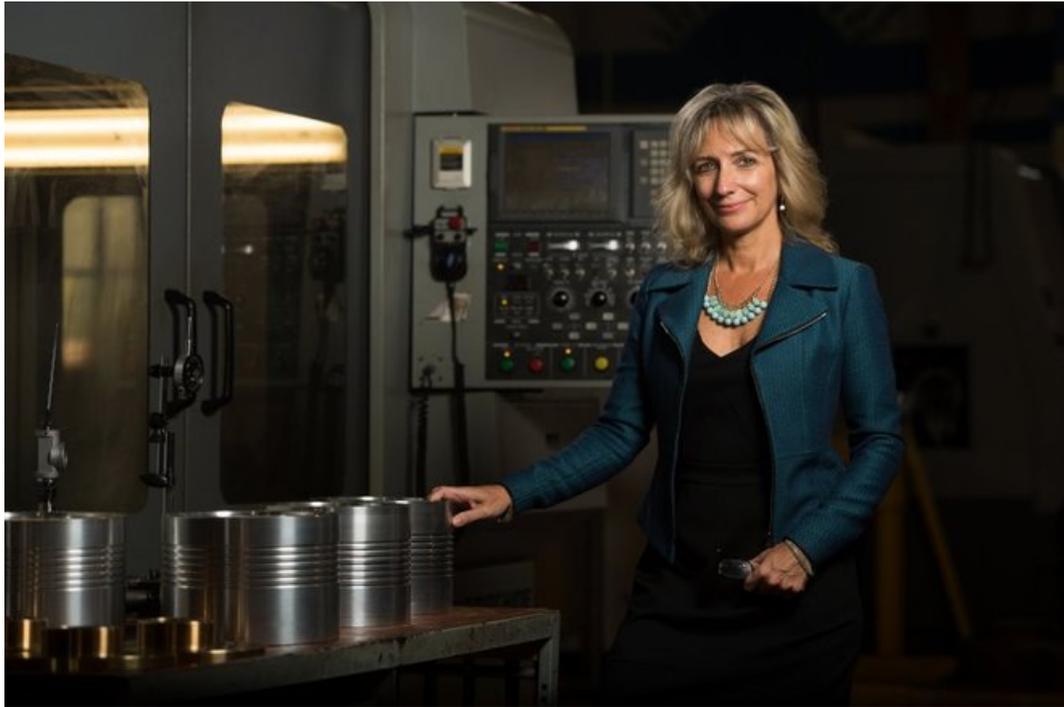


Seatorque provides solutions for boat builders



HOBIE HILER PHOTO Seatorque Executive Vice President, Jana Stolper, at Seatorque in Stuart



HOBIE HILER PHOTO Seatorque Executive Vice President Jana Stolper, left, and President and CEO Peter Stolper, opened Seatorque in 2005.



HOBIE HILER PHOTO Seatorque Executive Vice President Jana Stolper, left, meets with President and

By Gwen Carden

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Making boats and making boats better are passions that have driven Peter and Jana Stolper for more than 30 years.

Today this power couple, owners of Seatorque in Stuart, has established a worldwide reputation for designing and manufacturing ultimate quality products for large high-end yachts (50 to 200 feet in length). The Stolpers' array of inventions and innovations for boat builders includes products that boost performance, cost less in the long run and have think-

CEO Peter Stolper, at Seatorque in Stuart.



HOBIE HILER PHOTO The Seatorque staff at the manufacturing facility in Stuart.

outside-the-box properties that consistently grab the international yacht-building community's attention and respect.

Before coming to the Treasure Coast, the Stolpers built offshore racing boats in Rhode Island. They moved to Palm City in 1990 to build custom sport fishing boats.

Over the years it became obvious to the couple that there were mechanical elements of boats and boat building that could be vastly improved by re-thinking "how it's always been done" and by creating new technologies.

Geared up to navigate unexplored waters, they sold their boat-building business in 2004 and opened Seatorque in 2005. Their first product: a unique self-contained drive shaft unit called The Boss™ Bolt On Shaft System.

"Traditionally boat builders have cobbled together parts from different suppliers to make drive shafts for their yachts," said Jana. "Doing it that way is time-consuming and doesn't always result in a unit that performs well in terms of fuel efficiency, noise and vibration. We knew as boat builders that the less complex the parts are, the better.

"The Boss drive shaft is a single piece of equipment, like an engine. Installing it is simple, a matter of hours rather than days, and every part is engineered to work in harmony with all the other parts."

The Seatorque drive shaft is quieter than traditional shafts, has less vibration and minimizes mechanical losses to only 2 percent, leaving valuable extra power for propulsion.

Once Seatorque introduced The Boss, the Stolpers knew they had an instant winner. Business expanded immediately and

rapidly. Revenues doubled the first year and every year after that, including those stormy years of the recent recession.

Not content to just drift along with a single blockbuster idea, Seatorque has continued to innovate.

In October of 2013 they introduced Bio-Mar®, fully biodegradable gear oil and marine lubricant.

"Our drive shaft system is an oil-filled mechanical component, so we felt the need to fill it with high-performance eco-friendly and biodegradable oil that won't harm the environment if it leaks," said Jana.

"It's more expensive than synthetic oil but its performance and viscosity are superior."

Moving along on the drawing boards are at least two more "answers" to boat builders' challenges.

The company has developed a self-contained steering unit which, like the drive shaft product, is much simpler to install. The Stolpers have eliminated some of the components that typically leak in steering systems and have tied its operation to an electronic joystick. "Not only does it make life easier for the boat builder but it also improves the steering experience for the end user and it takes up less room in the boat," Jana said.

Equally exciting is the industry-specific hybrid technology Seatorque is working on.

"The marine industry is playing catch-up when it comes to hybrid technology," Jana explained. "Most developments involve 'marinizing' existing technology from the automotive industry. We have been developing a hybrid marine transmission and other components that will use alternate fuel

sources — introducing a platform that is marine-specific."

Seatorque employs 15 people who design, engineer and manufacture in the company's Stuart factory, and it employs 50 others in several offices in the U.K., South America, Australia, Canada, China and Taiwan. Ninety percent of its products are exported to major shipyards in Asia, which Jana said is where most boat building takes place these days.

"Our passion is to revolutionize the marine industry and develop new technology like alternative fuel systems and turning old technology into something new and creative," Jana explained.

As anyone can see, even without a nautical telescope, that passion is well underway.