

WATERFRONT YACHT BROKERAGE

“A Different Kind of Brokerage”

PRIORITIZES OWNERSHIP OVER SALES

by Bella Group



“We never start by talking about the boat a client wants. We begin by understanding what the client wants the boat to do.”

Whether a golf club, a car, a fine shotgun or something else, we've all experienced it: The moment we realize no matter how great it performed for our buddy, or for a magazine tester, it didn't produce the same results for us. As the items get bigger, the realizations become more expensive. Few items are as big or as expensive as a boat.

Co-founded in 2015 by Joe Kelly, a licensed boat captain, and Rob Thomson, Managing Partner of sister company Waterfront Properties and Club Communities, Waterfront Yacht Brokerage promised to turn the traditional concept of yacht brokering on its head.

Ownership over sales.

Waterfront Yacht is building a loyal client base of individuals who swear by the Jupiter, Florida brokerage's focus on the ownership experience.

Kelly and Thomson developed Waterfront Yacht, focusing on what clients have identified as the biggest issue dogging the industry: "There are a lot of very professional yacht brokers. They are great salespeople." The problem, Kelly said, is "they don't always know boats. Even when they do, they sometimes leave that knowledge at the door and concentrate on getting their client the boat the client has identified and making the sale."

There's nothing wrong with that; however, as a longtime boat captain, Kelly chose to focus on what he knew ultimately matters most to boat owners—performance and function. The boat the client wants isn't always the right boat.

Kelly talked at length about "those small pivots." These are the sometimes minor differences found on boats in the same class, and even from the same manufacturer, that significantly change the vessels' performance. "We never start by talking about the boat a client wants," Kelly said. "We begin by understanding what the client wants the boat to do." He went on, "What the last two years have shown us is clients really don't care what gets them to happy. They just want to be happy."

Over the years, Johnny Gray has owned too many boats to count. Early on they were mostly bass boats and houseboats. When Gray made the leap to "big boats," the experience fell short. "It was a Viking. I knew the name and I'd heard good things." Turns out, Gray was on the wrong boat. It took a single weekend on the water for Gray to realize the Viking Princess fulfilled none of his needs. "Joe took the time to understand what I wanted and needed out of the boat. It wasn't about the sale; it was about finding the perfect boat for my needs. And Joe did."

The perfect boat was a 76-foot Viking Sport Fisherman located and brokered by Joe Kelly. Kelly is also Johnny Gray's captain. Joe recognized over time there were at least a few drawbacks to the '76. The new 80-foot Viking Gray is currently building settles those issues. Asked for specifics on the boat, beyond a few tidbits, Gray responded repeatedly, "Ask Joe." That speaks volumes about the trust Kelly has earned over the years.

Rob Thomson commented, "This is so typical of Joe. Whether it's in the interview process with a prospective new client or in his work as a captain for a select group of our clients, he's always listening." Thomson should know. "Joe was my captain before we launched

Waterfront Yacht. Johnny Gray is experiencing exactly what I experienced. Joe's knowledge is the difference maker."

Waterfront Yacht's model is equally effective for sellers and purchasers. No matter which way the transaction is going, taking the time to understand the prospective owner's needs and desires ensures the transaction is efficient and satisfying.

Waterfront Yacht Broker Mike Ancona, a 10-year licensed boat captain, boiled down his decision to join Waterfront Yacht. "Integrity. We don't cut corners. Resources. I have the support to succeed on my sellers' and buyers' behalf." Ancona continued, "When I joined, Joe made it clear we were going to win on knowledge. He was right."

Matching the right owner with the right boat is our mandate. Doing this, we've found sales pretty well take care of themselves.



High caliber individuals.

Bill Maglio has owned boats for years. Recently, Bill utilized Mike Ancona to guide his step up from a 68' Hatteras to an 80' Hatteras. Echoing a common sentiment, Maglio's first comment had nothing to do with boats. "Mike's a very high caliber, high integrity individual. He knows boats. He didn't just try to sell me a boat." Maglio lauded Mike's laser focus on what he calls the three F's: "Form, fit and function. That's always been my gauge and that was Mike's too."

Function considerations encompassed safety and accommodations for Maglio's large family, including a growing brood of grandchildren. "These were the questions he asked, the concerns he considered and, in the end, the transaction and our new vessel meet our needs perfectly. When time came to purchase a tender for the larger boat, same thing. I put all of it in Mike's hands."

Ancona added, "Once I understand exactly how an owner plans to use the boat, I can put my energy into matching his or her needs to the correct vessel." When it goes right (and, in an exhaustive amount of interviews, it appears 'it' always goes right), there's a tremendous

buildup of trust. "Ours is a long-term relationship," Maglio said. "I know that Mike is looking out for me. The entire Waterfront Yacht team is my team. They saved me time by handling every aspect of the transaction. They guarded my investment by putting me on the right boat at the right price."

Joe Kelly concluded, "Sales are the least of our worries. Matching the right owner with the right boat is our mandate. Doing this, we've found sales pretty well take care of themselves. From my perspective, we're keeping it simple. Focus on the owner. Focus on their needs. Focus on the ownership experience after the sale."

Waterfront Yacht Brokerage – a different kind of brokerage.



Rob Thomson | 561.346.1881 | waterfront-properties.com