



*Outer Reef Yachts says its core values are customization, customer service and building yachts tough enough to cruise anywhere. Owners who have chosen Outer Reef for the past decade say their experience more than matches the marketing.*

BY KIM KAVIN

P E A C E O F M I N D



## WHERE DREAMS BECOME REALITY

“We never say anything is impossible. I say, ‘Give me a few days to work on it,’ and then I bang my brains against the wall to figure out a way to get it done.”

—JEFF DRUEK, PRESIDENT OF OUTER REEF YACHTS

An Outer Reef 860 Deluxbridge comes out of the mold at the shipyard.

CHRIS WHEELER WAS AWAITING GUESTS in the Bahamas aboard his 67-foot Outer Reef Classic Motoryacht, *Private Idaho*, when one of his batteries went down. “It was harming the performance of the whole house bank,” he says. “These things weigh like 150 pounds. It’s a massive battery. They’re also hard to get.” ¶ He knew a guy who had one in Jupiter, Florida, and he knew of a sailboat sitting about 100 miles away from there in Key Biscayne, waiting for a weather window to sail across to the islands. Needing help from afar, Wheeler called Capt. Randy Ives, who manages service projects and more for Outer Reef. ¶ “I asked if there was any way he could get this battery and put it aboard this sailboat that’s coming to the Bahamas in two days,” Wheeler says. “Well, Randy found a way to make it happen. They weren’t even selling me anything or making money off me. It’s just above-and-beyond service to help out an owner whose boat is 10 years old and well out of warranty—who’s in trouble in the middle of nowhere.” ¶ Wheeler’s experience epitomizes the level of customer service that Outer Reef president Jeff Druke says is a core company value. Along with a willingness to customize just about anything, and the ability to build boats that can cruise just about anywhere, customer service is a pillar of the brand’s culture. ¶ “Something is going to break. These are boats,” Druke says. “It really comes down to who gets it fixed and gives the client the confidence that it’s going to get fixed. It’s not about lip service. It’s about actually getting it done.”

## BUILDING VALUE, FROM THE START

To Druke’s thinking, customer service is intertwined with pretty much every part of a boat’s build-and-purchase process. From Day One, he works with clients to customize Outer Reef models in substantial ways—sometimes even moving bulkheads. And on every project, he and his team guide owners to make choices that not only the brand can support in situations like the one Wheeler faced but also will help to keep resale value high. Druke wants owners to know that when they’re ready to sell, they

will have an exit strategy. ¶ “There is a direct link between customer service and resale value,” Druke says. “We control probably 98 percent of every Outer Reef that comes back on the resale market. That is unheard of in itself. At the end of the day, when our clients want to get out of their boat or they want to build a new boat, I want to control that resale value. With me controlling that boat on the brokerage market, I can command the highest dollar amount for it.” ¶ This past summer, he says, he sold two brokerage Outer Reefs—a 65 and an 86—for more than the sellers paid new. That’s the whole idea, Druke says: “If you had a sour relationship with a client, why would they ask you to resell it for them? I want to represent every one of our boats.”



## CUSTOM BUILDS

Customization is part of the build process at the Outer Reef yard and can be done anywhere on board. In some cases, the builder has moved bulkheads and adapted layouts to satisfy client requests.

## GOING TO SERIOUS LENGTHS

Of all the owners Druke has worked with over the years, Larry Castellani is probably the one who stood the best chance of pushing the builder to its breaking point. A longtime boater who had owned numerous vessels, he bought a 70-foot Outer Reef he liked, but he then realized he needed more space for his growing family, including his grandchildren. Castellani’s new brief included four staterooms—all with king- or queen-size berths and en suite heads—as well as two crew cabins in the stern, including one with a king-size berth for the couple who had been running his boats as crew for years. ¶ Outer Reef’s largest model, an 86, came with three staterooms and one crew cabin. A fourth stateroom was possible—but with bunks and a shared head. ¶ “And on top of that, we wanted to build to home specs,” Castellani says. “We wanted 8-inch risers, 10-inch platforms. The

idea of having stairs that do not conform to muscle memory is not a good idea on a boat.” ¶ Druke says he put in more than 400 hours of time on drawings, revisions and more revisions to make those requests a reality. At some point in the 10-month-long design process, he gave Castellani a laptop with Skype pre-loaded, so Castellani could click on Druke’s picture and reach him anytime, anywhere. ¶ “If I had to pay Jeff Druke by the word or by the number of emails that went back and forth with the different layouts, trust me, he’d be a billionaire.”



**DETAILS, DETAILS**

“These things that I was doing—I was essentially getting a full-on custom boat at a semicustom or production price.”

—CHRIS WHEELER, OWNER OF THE 67-FOOT OUTER REEF *PRIVATE IDAHO*



**ARTISTRY EVERYWHERE**

“We got to the point where we were calling him Michelangelo. He’d take what we wanted and figure out a way to get it done.”

—LARRY CASTELLANI, OWNER OF MULTIPLE OUTER REEF YACHTS, INCLUDING THE BUILDER’S FIRST 90-FOOTER



The 860 Deluxbridge Motoryacht *HQ* and 610 Motoryacht *Sandana* highlight the range of sizes Outer Reef builds.

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## KNOTS

That's the top speed owner Dave Scudellari says he can achieve aboard his 70-foot Outer Reef, *Ana Luisa*. He usually cruises at 9 to 10 knots but likes being able to outrun bad weather.



## THE DREAM

Outer Reef president Jeff Drucek spent time aboard the 88-foot *Argo* in Patagonia and rounding Cape Horn. "The boat looked like it had just come out of the showroom," Drucek says, even after heaving to in a storm.

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## PERCENT

Number of Outer Reef builds Drucek says he handles for sale on the brokerage market. He believes commanding a high resale value is all part of customer service.

Castellani says. ¶ And eventually, Drupek figured out how to give Castellani exactly what he wanted. He created more space for the sleeping areas by using the entire 86-foot mold that Outer Reef had, changing the swim platform from an integral part of the boat to an extension. Drupek also found a way to give Castellani's wife, Joan, the full-size washer and dryer she wanted in the master stateroom. ¶ "Jeff and Joan were simpatico," Castellani says. "After six months of this, I wanted to send them both to a political correctness class because it would not be uncommon for Joan to get on Skype with Jeff and not invite me. That's not funny. I'm paying for this thing." ¶ Drupek, who got his start as a builder of custom homes, looks back on the process fondly. As challenging as the design brief was, it gave him ideas that can now be used to enhance Outer Reef builds in the future. ¶ "I can't tell you how many times he profusely apologized for monopolizing my time and asking for drawing after drawing after drawing, but it pushed me to be a better designer," Drupek says. "I'm designing a 97 for a client right now, and we're doing the dance. It's going to be an extraordinary vessel. It's really geared toward watersports, diving, fishing—it's set up specifically for his lifestyle. That's what we do."



**DESIGN DAYS**  
Owners of the Outer Reef 610 *Equisence* (and their dog) in a design session with company president Jeff Drupek for their second Outer Reef, a 720 Deluxe Motoryacht.

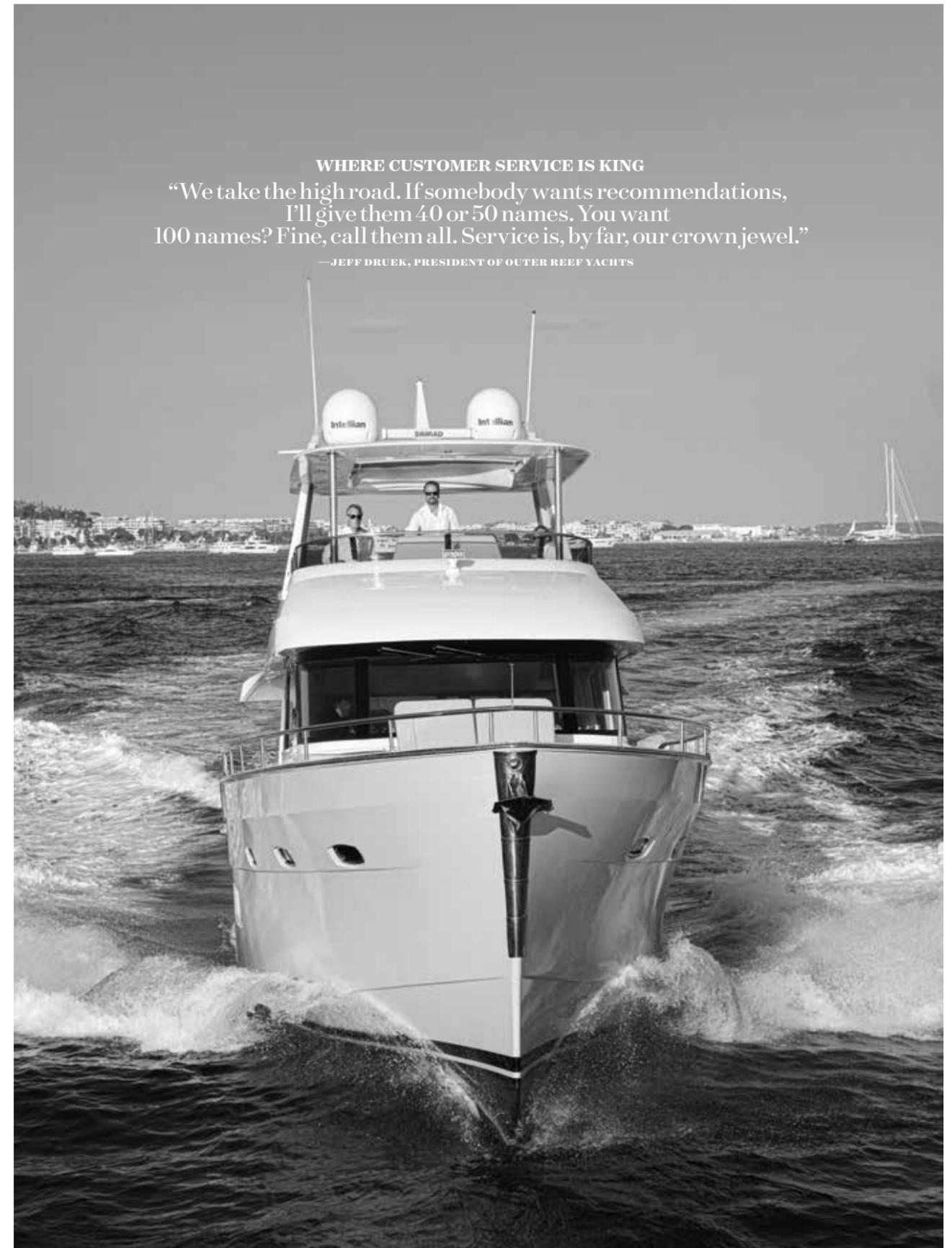
**CONFIDENCE UNDERFOOT**

For Dave Scudellari, the process of building his 70-foot Outer Reef, *Ana Luisa*, was also a bit about customization but a lot more about building with confidence. ¶ Scudellari had owned a series of boats: a 22, then a 28, followed by a 40 and then a 54 that he kept for 17 years. He loved heading out with his family and friends on New York's Long Island Sound, sometimes having 15 or 20 people on board for a day of fun. ¶ As he got older, he wanted to cruise the Bahamas. His boat could take a beating, he says, but he didn't feel good in the rough stuff. "I have great respect for the ocean," he says, "so if I was going to do the Bahamas, I wanted to have a bluewater boat. This wasn't going out to [Rhode Island's] Block Island. This would be crossing the Gulf Stream." ¶ About 10 percent of Outer Reef owners cruise to remote locations, Drupek says, including one who took an 88-footer to Patagonia and rounded

Cape Horn in South America. The boats can handle the kind of cruising Scudellari wanted to do. ¶ But Scudellari, having dealt with his share of shipyards over the years, also wanted to make sure Outer Reef would have his back in terms of support as an owner-operator. Outer Reef connected him with existing owners to interview, including one guy, he remembers, who had an older boat in the Bahamas with Outer Reef still sending him parts. Something about a battery that died. That story made an impression on him. ¶ Scudellari took delivery of *Ana Luisa* in 2018 and had a captain deliver it to the Bahamas. He and his wife got aboard in the Abacos. ¶ "We waved goodbye to the captain and took command of the vessel," he recalls. "It was unbelievable. It was so beautiful." ¶ On the first leg of their trip, though, an alarm sounded. Just like Wheeler had done when he ran into trouble in the Bahamas, Scudellari called Ives at Outer Reef. ¶ "I'm taking pictures in the engine room so he can see what I'm looking at," Scudellari says. "We sorted it out, and it was done. That's why I have the peace of mind that I can be adventurous. Things will go bump in the night. It's boating. But there's a support system. I have someone to call, and he knows this boat better than I do. That is what makes the difference for an owner-operator." ¶ Drupek says that if Ives isn't available, a whole list of other people are, including him—24/7/365. Buying a boat is not a small undertaking, he adds, and Outer Reef's philosophy is that owners deserve that kind of support. ¶ "A lot of our clients, whether they're going to take a month and cruise or a couple weeks here and there, it's a large investment," Drupek says. "If you're out for a month and you go down for a week, you just lost 25 percent of your time. We understand that." ¶ Each of the owners says Outer Reef's commitment to quality and service is why they would be happy to work with the builder again. As Castellani puts it, thinking out loud about how he might challenge Drupek beyond the 90-foot *Julianne*, "If we were going to build another boat and Jeff had the 115 available, we'd have to give that serious consideration." ♥

*Take the next step: outerreefyachts.com*

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WHERE CUSTOMER SERVICE IS KING  
"We take the high road. If somebody wants recommendations, I'll give them 40 or 50 names. You want 100 names? Fine, call them all. Service is, by far, our crown jewel."  
—JEFF DRUEK, PRESIDENT OF OUTER REEF YACHTS