

A new full-service marine dealership, ***Emerald Coast Marine Group***, is making big waves with locations in Niceville/Destin and Orange Beach, AL.



## Creating a “Better Boating Experience”

with



by Wanda Kenton Smith



Prior to its launch, owners Shawn Talpey and Keri Doscher previously served as senior managers for a large marine retailer in Destin. Shawn served in roles as general sales manager, director of sales, and general manager, while Keri worked her way from marketing management to director of finance.

Due to the complementary nature of their positions, the twosome became trusted colleagues. In the course of conversation, they often exchanged ideas about how to improve the boating experience for customers.

When their former employer became part of a corporate merger, Talpey and Doscher determined the time was right to pursue their dreams. In 2015, they left the security of great jobs and paychecks to launch a boutique-style, customer-centric dealership which they named Emerald Coast Marine.

In the beginning, both worked countless hours buying and selling pre-owned boats with the goal to eventually represent top brands. Their reputation in the boating community gave them credibility, but few in their circle truly understood their motivation for taking such a big risk.

“Many asked if we had lost our minds,” chuckles Talpey. “We worked for the top-ranked retailer in the country and with a great group of people. But we wanted to control our destiny and to improve the boater experience significantly.”







## Today, that pivotal decision has paid off

In its short 3.5-year history, Emerald Coast Marine Group has enjoyed tremendous growth. The twosome moved into the former Northlight Marina in Niceville in 2016 to operate new and used boat sales. They established a strong synergy with the property owner, and in 2017, an opportunity was presented to assume marina ownership and operations. The marina was rebranded as Emerald Coast Marine, and a strategic expansion plan was launched.

Today, the dealership employs a staff of 40+, including many former colleagues who left posts to join the "dream team." The dealership features new and used boat sales; the ECM Yachts division which includes brokerage and consignment offerings; service and parts department; large, hurricane-rated dry storage facility; wet slips; Emerald Coast Boat Club; plus Emerald Coast Yacht Club with a boatload of member amenities including private pool/cabanas, customer lounge, spa-style facilities and a VIP Sunset Vista Deck. A new two-story indoor show

room is currently under construction, slated to debut next Spring. The Locals Restaurant is situated onsite and is a popular waterfront gathering spot to enjoy fresh coastal cuisine.

Besides its earned Five Star ratings, strong customer and product demand led Emerald Coast Marine to launch a location in Orange Beach, AL this summer. This venue offers new and used boat sales, yacht sales, brokerage, and consignment, plus affiliated service support.

"We credit our top-notch staff for our growth and success, and we're so grateful for the support of our community," said Doscher. "It's exciting to work in an industry we love and to share our passion for the boating lifestyle with our customers."



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In keeping with its customer-centric focus, ECMG hosts a series of events ranging from fireworks cruises to VIP dock parties, to its signature Coastal Escapes program including rendezvous to see the Blue Angels, dive-in movies at Crab Island (recent showing during Shark Week attracted 170 boats!), concerts and more. It also offers boating education programs including quarterly classes with the US Power Squadron; an active ladies' boating group; a series of fishing and service seminars; plus the launch of the Emerald Coast Boat Club in 2018 which offers an affordable cost of entry with access to a fleet of boats, complete with free, hands-on instruction.

The dealership represents several top brands, including Key West, Billistic, Crownline, Crevalle, Sea Pro, Blackfin,

Hurricane and Godfrey pontoons. It received national recognition as a 2019 Top 10 Dealer for Key West, Crownline, Blackfin and Crevalle.

### The momentum continues

With the launch of ECM Yachts comes exciting new 2020 product from Carver, Marquis and Beneteau Yachts featuring Swift Trawler, Gran Turismo and Monte Carlo.

Also new for 2020 includes Nautique towboats, Crest Pontoons, Finseeker and outboard-powered Beneteau models including Barracuda, Flyer and Antares.

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