



# Measuring our Oceans Future

Tracey Whiteford spent quality time with the key players in the SeaKeepers Society and those willing to help the cause. Endeavouring to pass on the correct and most up to date information directly from the source.



*Jim Gilbert Board President SeaKeepers Society*

## **Interview with Jim Gilbert Board President of SeaKeepers Society**

"SeaKeepers is the only marine conservation organisation built by the yacht industry, from the keel up. We are here to save the sea, one yacht at a time."

### **What individual passions lead you to become so involved in the ocean and the preservation of it?**

"No part of the world has meant more to me than the oceans. I'm a surfer, sailor, fisherman, and diver. I fished offshore commercially, raised oysters and shellfish, and owe my professional success as a professional writer and editor around nautical publishing to the ocean. I have travelled to every major body of water, and have witnessed first-hand the deterioration of the sea. I've also witnessed several major successful efforts at protecting the seas and their resources – most notably the return of the striped bass on the US East Coast and the restoration of Lake Erie – so while I know that what we have the power to destroy, we also have the power to protect and restore."

### **Who do you think were the key people who played a major role in initially launching SeaKeepers society?**

"Two people from the Los Angeles area – Albert Gersten and Tom Houston – came to me in 1997 with the idea for putting ocean monitoring systems on yachts. Credit goes to them for the concept. But the success of ISKS is due to the enthusiasm of our earliest financial supporters, who gave us their dollars and their names before the concept had even been proved viable. Those people – Alex Dreyfoos, Paul Allen, Jim Moran, Fred Balm, Jim Clark, John Williams, Charlie Gallagher and Rich DeVos – to name a few – not only gave SeaKeepers its financial start, but gave the Society the credibility it needed. The message they sent was clear: if people like these wealthy yacht owners



*Paul Allens Yacht Octopus has a SeaKeepers 1000TM installed onboard*

were concerned about the sea, maybe we all should care about it, too. We are always on the lookout for new supporters. We are especially excited about getting formal approval as a not-for-profit association in Monaco. While we've always been an international organisation – we have members from 15 countries now – we are particularly keen to get a stronger base of support in Europe.”

**What new technology or major group/government interests are the driving forces at present behind the society and the healthy future of our oceans?**

“Our latest technological advance is adapting our existing blue-water weather/ocean monitoring system for use in near-shore monitoring. By mid-century, 75%

of the world's population is expected to live within 50 miles of the sea. More than 80% of marine life lives on the coast. The most dramatic changes taking place in the oceans are happening near the coast. Protecting this part of the ocean is critical to protecting human health, ensuring mankind's future nutrition, and protecting human financial resources in the form of property values and commercial activities (commercial fishing, tourism, shipbuilding, recreational diving, fishing, boating, etc.). The program is called the Coastal Monitoring Project, and our scientific partner is the Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, CA. We will be testing and deploying the beta prototypes in S. California and when the

technology is perfected we hope it will be used everywhere in the world – especially along the shorelines of emerging nations where people will be most negatively affected by collapsing marine ecosystems. Every coast in the world can benefit from inexpensive, high-volume, high quality marine data.”

**How do you explain to the general public how SeaKeepers Society works, in layman's terms so to speak? Why would a boat owner want to be a part of the society, what will they be contributing to the preservation of their environment?**

“SeaKeepers' mission is to find free rides for inexpensive but high-quality scientific instruments that will provide scientists with better >>



information to understand the causes of – and solutions to – the decline of the oceans. By supporting the deployment of these instruments, yacht owners and other benefactors dramatically increase our ability to predict weather, model climate changes, and understand the full impact of the changes now taking place in the basic chemistry of the oceans due to global warming and absorption of greenhouse gases. At its simplest level, every boat or city downwind of a SeaKeeper-equipped vessel or platform benefits from better weather forecasts.



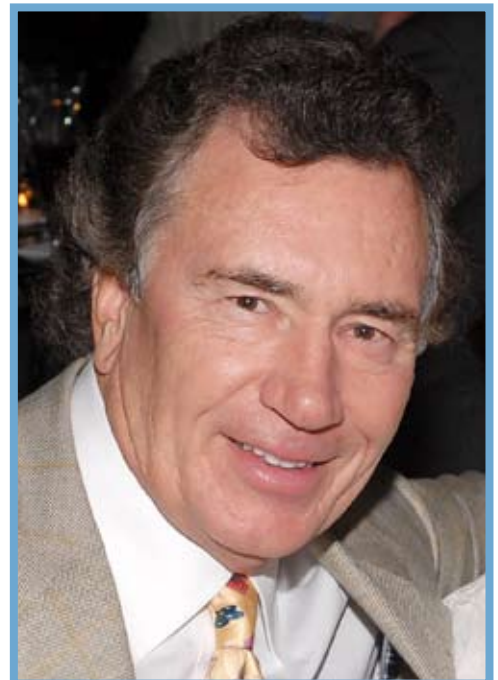
*SeaKeepers 1000TM data collection device installed on yachts and various other platforms*

At its most sophisticated, SeaKeepers is shedding important light on such complex and potentially catastrophic challenges as the increasing acidification of the sea.

The name “SeaKeepers” is too powerful and too universal to be left in the province of wealthy yacht owners. Every school child in the world should be wearing a button that say, “I’m A SeaKeeper, Are You?” When you tell someone you’re a SeaKeeper they know exactly where your passions lie. We need to maximise the extraordinary power of the SeaKeeper brand for the benefit of the oceans.”

**Mathematics to communicate the technological power of SeaKeepers:**

“We have 55 systems with another 20 in the process of installation. Every 10 yachts or ships that are underway (at 13 knots) and transmitting provide 14,400 daily datapoints (we take measurements every minute) covering 3,120 nautical miles of ocean. Since every datapoint contains a minimum of 10 different scientific measurements, these same 10 yachts provide 150,000 different and discrete pieces of scientific information every day. Multiply these numbers by the actual number of SeaKeeper yachts in service and by 360 days in a year and you can see the huge volume of information flowing thanks to SeaKeepers. The National Weather Service (which passes on our data to the World Meteorological Organization) estimates that 6% of the total marine weather data now comes from SeaKeepers-equipped vessels.”



*Mark Grosvenor SeaKeepers Board Chairman 2003 to 2005*

**Mark Grosvenor former Board Chairman of SeaKeepers Society**

“It is all part of knowledge being power”

Mark Grosvenor is a man with a passion to make a difference to the environment he loves so much. Mark has owned yachts and explored the world’s oceans his entire life and came to the realisation many years ago that “our oceans are not a sponge, they do not soak up all our rubbish, oil and emissions. They are living and need to be protected before they are destroyed.” Mark was the third board chairman of SeaKeepers from 2003 to 2005 and is still actively involved today. Mark is very realistic and down to earth. His positive form of persuasion has fuelled Seakeepers society and his contributions have added him to the list of esteemed admirals club members of The SeaKeepers Society.



*Mr Clemens Van der Werf President of Dockwise Yacht Transport*

Mark expressed that the society is all about "making people aware and spreading the word. The scientific data collected helps prove the effects humans are having on our oceans, the result will hopefully be that people start taking notice and stop ruining the environment we all live in." Mark Grosvenor is proud of the initiatives major contributors have made from the inauguration of the society and the diversification the society is seeing today. Major yacht builders are joining the cause by placing the data collection machines onto their yachts at build stage and incorporating the devise as apart of the yachts package. Captains and crew have also become heavily involved with the introduction of the SeaKeepers professional's membership. Mark has great expectations for the future of the

SeaKeepers society; there is exciting technology on the horizon that will further contribute to the information highway that will be saving our oceans for future generations.

**Mr Clemens Van der Werf President of Dockwise Yacht Transport**

"Even if it is a small thing to do it is better than doing nothing"

Clemens introduced the SeaKeepers 1000TM data collecting devise to the newest ship in his fleet in 2008; Yacht Express. Clemens believed his Dockwise ships that travel the same routes on a regular basis were perfect for this type of technology. Obviously Clemens is an advocate of ensuring our oceans are clean and alive for his children and grandchildren to experience the best of what our natural world offers. This type of devotion shown

by Dockwise yacht transport, spending \$75,000 for the machine and instillation can only inspire others to make a difference. Clemens is a man with forward thinking and is switched onto the effects humans have on the ocean and is prepared to contribute to the process of finding solutions. "For the future generations we need to try to have knowledge and understanding so we can make changes or not." Clemens plans to add more machines to his fleet in the future.

Ultimate magazine will keep you up to date with further information in future issues on the outcomes and positive work SeaKeepers association continues to do throughout the world. We are dedicated to the individuals that choose to make a difference. 