

COMPANY PROFILE WHITMARSH HIGH PERFORMANCE RIBS LTD

JAMES WHITMARSH, HAS SPENT HIS ENTIRE WORKING LIFE IN THE HIGH PERFORMANCE POWERBOAT INDUSTRY, AND HAS RECENTLY INTRODUCED HIS LATEST INNOVATION THE EXOTIC WHITMARSH 11M RIB.



Throughout the 1980s the name Bonito and Whitmarsh were by-words on the offshore race circuit and high performance pleasure boat industry when father Brian and sons James and Stefan were jointly embroiled in building their own brand of maritime speed machines. But it was the name Bonito that established the Whitmarsh family name in the high performance powerboat industry. The Bonito 36 was designed in 1978 by Brian (Bendy) Hendicott and the first boat 'Miss Pearlcorde' came second in the 1980 World Class 2 championships in Viareggio, Italy. Also during the 1980s the red hulled, flush deck, outboard powered 'Cossack' enjoyed success in the hands of former disc jockey and television presenter Noel Edmonds, and Bonito cruisers continued to clinch many race victories during the 1980/90s in Production Cruiser class that was very popular in those days.



Cossack, 1980



Miss Pearlcorde, 1979



It was the Whitmarsh family who jointly transformed their Bonito design from a flush deck racing machine into an unconventional superb eye catching express cruiser powered by either twin inboards or outboard motors. At the time when most builders were producing traditional family motor cruisers, Bonito were turning out low, sleek monohulls with sumptuous contemporary accommodation. James Whitmarsh had an uncanny knack of knowing what the racing enthusiast wanted and had become familiar with all aspects of boat production from engines to interior design and manufacture. Under the sponsorship of Vodafone, in the days when mobile phones were the size of house bricks and almost as heavy, the Bonito 36 was winning races and even won the Cowes-Torquay marathon in 1986, with Wonderfire 36' coming second in the Cowes-Torquay 1987.

During a conversation I had with James (who was sporting >

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a Simply Red, Mick Hucknell hairstyle at the time around late 1988) he revealed that the Bonito company was going to start building Baby Bonito, a 27 foot version of the 36. The first one out of the mould sported Vodafone livery and James raced the boat himself, which had a few placings and won the Prudential Bournemouth race. It was powered by twin Mercury 200 outboards and although it never won any titles, its stunning appearance alone was enough to persuade me to buy one. Supported by Weru, the German double glazing company, my Bonito was fitted with a big single Ford diesel engine with transmission through the rather agricultural looking surface drive from Lancing Marine. I never fitted trim tabs so it struggled to get on the plane, but once it was up and running 'Weru' went like a rocket.

Production of Bonitos stopped in 1990, and James joined Sunseeker International building Super Hawks, and later the Buzzi designed Sunseeker XS 2000. The entrepreneurial urge took James Whitmarsh in the direction of the ever expanding RIB market and, based on the Baby Bonito design, a 9 metre RIB was born. Its styling was typically 'Whitmarsh' - low sleek and modernistic. Unfortunately he put this on hold to carry out some large superyacht re-fits in the South of France before returning to Sunseeker as the Med warranty manager. Ironically brother Stefan, meanwhile, had been appointed superyacht shipyard manager of Sunseeker Superyachts in Poole.

More recently, with his unquestionable skills in design and



construction, James has launched his own company, Whitmarsh High Performance RIBs Ltd, and the first model, Whitmarsh 11m, has been launched and tested. The styling and performance are, as one would expect, superb. The running surface is based on the tried and tested Bonito 36, but the interior is very 21st century. Powered by twin Mercury outboards, the Whitmarsh 11m is aimed at the Superyacht tender market, but will appeal to those looking for the ultimate speed machine with superb handling, safety and performance, together with luxurious interior fittings and a sleek, eye-catching appearance.

