

BRAD SCHOENWALD

TRES MARTIN



With the increased awareness for safety in the industry, we have been following Tres Martin's Performance Boat School as it has grown. Major manufacturers, such as Outerlimits and Liquid Technologies, now provide his school to all new customers. We recently caught up with Tres Martin and Brad Schoenwald to speak to them about the program and expansion to the curriculum.

BackToSchool with Tres

What motivated you to start your school? **Tres:** I began to hear from my marine customers that they were not using their boats because of the high cost (or loss) of insurance. Jacky and I were talking one night and she said that I should start teaching people how to drive their high performance boats properly. We took a chance and started the school in Florida. We were determined to make a difference, it was well overdue.

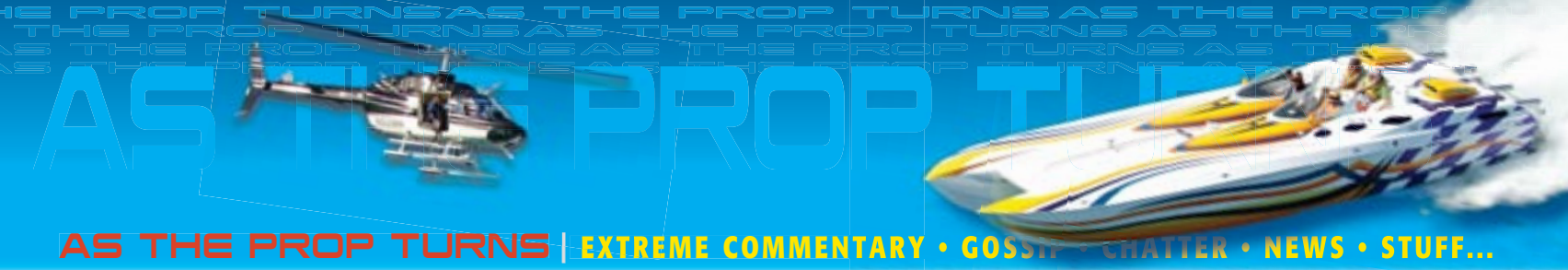
Has the insurance situation changed now? **Tres:** To a certain degree. The insurers understand that, with proper training, the risk in these boats can be dramatically reduced. So with the proper review and oversight, insurance can be found. Many people today cannot get insurance until they pass our course.

Are boat owners receptive to the school and the idea some must take the course to get insurance? **Tres:** I think more and more owners are discovering that the course is no joke. This isn't a hoop to jump through to satisfy an insurance requirement, or a check box on a certificate. You MUST pass the course. That means that in addition to the written exam, you must demonstrate understanding of the skill concepts required for driving a boat - or you don't get a certificate. We will spend more time with you, and even travel to your boat, if we have to. The bottom line is that this is the real deal, advance skill training for performance boaters.

You recently brought Brad Schoenwald onboard as an instructor. We know Brad through his Be-Safe involvement (www.boatingsafe.org). Tell us why you chose him as an instructor? **Tres:** Brad brings to the school years of boating experience and knowledge. His credibility as a long term Coast Guard Officer really brings a new depth to the program. We have similar goals. We like teaching and we both enjoy passing new skills and knowledge on to those who participate. I wanted to bring someone in with a different perspective on this course, someone who has best intentions for the industry. Brad's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

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BackToSchool with Tres - Cont'd

long term views and goals are clear and he has the same determination as I do to make an impact on the industry. More importantly, I have a comfort level with Brad that allows us to work together in growing this school.

Tell us about your new courses? **Tres:** The Ultra High Performance Course is a day and a half course that I started over two years ago. In addition we have developed the Performance Boat Class (80 mph or less), which combines the instructional points and theory of the first class, with multi-media presentations in a group environment. With this format we can remove the on-the-water experience and open the class up to more people at one time, which dramatically reduces the individual costs - It also makes the class 'portable'. The Basic Boat Indoctrination Class provides the opportunity for an instructor to spend a day aboard your own boat, in your own waters, covering basic operation and boating skills. This course is better suited for beginners.

Are all the courses on site in Ocala, Florida? **Tres:** The Ultra High Performance Course is offered in Ocala. This course, and all other courses, are completely exportable. We hold classes all over the country and we will be giving classes at many of the Poker Runs this year. We also have the ability to tailor a course, or write courses to meet specific boats, manufacturers, dealers, or student groups needs.

What manufacturers and event organizers are you working with to offer your classes? **Tres:** Outerlimits and Liquid Technologies are offering the course to their new customers. We expect several other manufacturers to participate this year as well. We also plan to conduct classes on-site before some of the major boating events. We are talking with the organizers at Smoke on The Water, the Florida Powerboat Club, Lake Havasu Desert Storm and some others. We also have a few dealers who are putting new boat owners thru the school.

Brad, How did you become involved with Tres and the boat school? **Brad:** About two years ago I was boat shopping. After buying the boat, Tres told me I should really consider taking his course.

Did you? **Brad:** Absolutely not! Why would I take a boating course? I am a U.S. Coast Guard Officer with thousands of hours of sea time, I train & teach others to drive boats, I drove Motor lifeboats in Oregon, I've been to all the schools, and have all the certificates and t-shirts, and a Masters license! What is some race boat guy going to teach me! [Laughing...]

Well what changed? **Brad:** I woke up! Look, at every level of my previous training we always had type specific training and certification. If I went from driving a 41 ft Utility Boat to a 47 ft Motor Lifeboat, the Coast Guard required that you be checked-out on it. Not unlike flying different aircraft. Performance boats, sport boats, center consoles, etc,... running beyond say 60 MPH need to have type-specific training, otherwise people can really get into trouble. I remember running with some other boats and my boat acted a little strange in a turn crossing

some other boat's wakes. I felt the boat respond in a way I was not familiar with, so I spoke to Tres. Remember it's not 80% of what we know that keeps us out of trouble it's the 20% or less we don't know that gets us sideways. I took his course and realized I had a lot to learn.

So, then how did you become involved as an instructor? **Brad:** When I first arrived in Fort Lauderdale (2 and a half years ago), I began volunteering for different safe boating organizations. Tres asked me to develop some lesson plans for him regarding impaired operations and human factors. As our discussions and relationship grew, in conjunction with my upcoming retirement from the Coast Guard, it seemed natural to join with Tres and help expand the boat school.

What convinced you to join with Tres? **Brad:** Core Values. Beyond the skills and natural ability to teach, Tres is doing this the right way for all the right reasons. It's not about stacking up cash or reeling people into the boat shop. It was very apparent for me, from the beginning, that his primary motivation is to help save lives and help save our waterborne performance freedom at the same time. I have lived with Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty for over the last 20 years and, in moving into the Performance Boating world, my primary concern was finding similar values in the others I associate with - Tres brings those values to the table. Tres is also very analytical. He spends a lot of time doing research and development, and driving boats almost everyday like he has most of his life. I am not so inquisitive in my approach, so I really think our personality types compliment each other.

With your 20 year Coast Guard background, why are your courses not certified by the Coast Guard or any states. **Brad:** I've read the NASBLA (National Association of State Boating Law Administrators) curriculum guide and we would have to change way too much to fit into their mold. I am not saying NASBLA approved courses do not provide value, they focus on basic boating skills. We are teaching advanced skill concepts, like going from middle school to a graduate degree. We will always encourage boaters to take any of these basic courses that apply. They provide excellent pre-requisite skills and are offered at little or not cost, so it's a no-brainer. But like driver schools, the class we took when we were 15 to get our drivers license is much different than the say, the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving.

Sounds good. Any final words? **Tres:** We intend to offer courses for all types of boat and speeds, so everyone has the opportunity to become educated - and a safer boater. Reducing accident rates will undoubtedly lower insurance costs for everyone, keeping people in their boats. We offer the BEST School and give the BEST proprietary knowledge available in this market today. Every student who has taken the class knows they can ask questions and get any information they need from us, free of charge. Whether it's about setup, handling concerns, propellers, weights or water conditions. They are students for lifetime. Don't learn by accident! •

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Tres Martin's Performance Boat School
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