

SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW 2010

BOATING BUSINESS

MONDAY 2 AUGUST

SPECIAL SHOW EDITION

SHOW WRAP – TRENDS CONTINUE
SECURED WITH FINGERPRINTS
STEYR'S HYBRID PROPULSION

A Different Perspective

STORY **PETER SCOTT**

Amongst the advances in marine technology has been the development of the night vision camera. Although used in military applications for some time, marine night vision cameras are now becoming more common on boats, both large and small, where there is a need for night running.

One company that has pioneered the development of night vision and low-light cameras is OceanView Technologies, a subsidiary of the VEI Group. Says Michael J. Bader, CEO of OceanView, "About four years ago, VEI with more than 22 years experience in manufacturing electronics, recognised the need to address a greater level of safety where night navigation was involved. So we launched OceanView and the company's growth over the time has been phenomenal."

The fully owned American company based in Boca Raton in Florida, also has a large manufacturing facility in Dallas, Texas where the OceanView night vision cameras are manufactured. OceanView now have a range of eight night vision cameras suitable for applications from small pleasure craft to superyachts. "Our cameras range in price from US\$5,000 right up to US\$142,000 so we have a model suitable for every conceivable application," says Bader. Now, all eight models are also available in high definition which doubles the range.

Bader says the OceanView technology has been widely accepted as leading edge technology, guaranteed to last. "There were a number of challenges in developing the OceanView cameras. We had to address problems such as salt and corrosion, incredible variances in heat and cold and the constant pounding caused by the sea. We recognised that reliability and durability were the key to success and we concentrated on that aspect of our cameras."

Having perfected the housing and other componentry, OceanView then turned its attention to picture quality. Rather than sending the IT to China or some other Asian country, OceanView decided to



Australian distributors David Tanner, AMI Sales (left) and Errol Cain, R Electronics with Michael Bader

manufacture all their componentry - there are at least 100 individual components in each camera - in the United States. "The key to our success is that all of our cameras are hand built - these cameras cannot be built on an assembly line - and with each camera, one of our staff takes ownership of the unit. They take incredible pride in their work and that is the secret," added Bader.

Not content to depend on component suppliers, OceanView also manufacture computers and circuitry for their camera range. In addition to the OceanView night vision cameras, the company also manufactures some 86 different display modules for helm applications. As with their night vision cameras, the helm displays are suitable for every application, from centre consoles to large motor yachts, and retail from US\$2500 to US\$14,000.

Bader introduced the OceanView range of night vision cameras to Australia following a visit to the Sydney International Boat Show, three years ago. "I was fortunate to meet Errol Cain from R Electronics who subsequently took on the Australian distributorship of our night vision range and the following year, leading marine wholesaler AMI Sales also decided to distribute the OceanView range.

"We have been very fortunate to find two such committed distributors and this ensures that we support our products in the field. We don't sell on the internet - the only way you can buy an OceanView night vision camera or helm display is through our authorised dealers. That has been critical to our success. We support our dealers and in turn they support our products with after sales service, installation and warranty," says Bader.

The OceanView night vision range is constantly evolving and Bader says that evolution of product is due in part to the dealer feedback they receive. Importantly for Bader, the introduction of the OceanView range to the Australian market has also led to marketing opportunities in New Zealand, Vietnam, Thailand and Singapore.

Not only have the OceanView night vision and low light cameras been widely accepted in the pleasure boat market, significantly their products have been widely integrated into the demanding coastal and offshore rescue services as well as commercial operations such as ferries.

For further information on the OceanView night vision cameras, contact either R Electronics or AMI Sales or arrange to catch up with Mike Bader at the show, through his two distributors.