



The Hornet Marine Story

Hornet Marine was founded in 2009, yet we have built our company on a proud heritage of innovation, perseverance and a timeless design.

It all started in the early 1960's when Hal Hartmann, a United Technologies engineer and father to Hornet Marine's David Hartmann, was presented with a challenging new project: to prove that gas turbine (jet) engines can handle extreme environments. Working alongside famed boat designers Jim Wynne and Walt Walters, Hartmann successfully did so by introducing jet engines to the world of performance boating.

With 900 H.P. provided by twin gas turbine engines, Hartmann, Wynne and Walters built the Thunderbird: 32-feet of aluminum power unlike anything the powerboat industry had seen before.



Hal Hartmann, Jim Wynne, and Walt Walters aboard the Thunderbird, winning the 1966 Sam Griffith Memorial Race.

To put their experiment to the test, the crew of three entered the 1966 Sam Griffith Memorial Race: a grueling 172-mile competition of open ocean endurance. Despite starting the race late, the Thunderbird persisted through the rough conditions and 6-12 foot seas from Miami to Bimini and back. Out of the 30 other boats competing, some sank and others gave up mere minutes into the race. Proving their groundbreaking project to be a success, the Thunderbird's crew finished an entire 70 miles ahead of the only other boat to complete the race. The three members of the Thunderbird's crew each played a role in the inspiration for the Hornet 17, and can be credited for perfecting its incomparable deep-vee hull design.

Over forty years later, our roots in the performance boating industry continue to inspire us in everything we do at Hornet Marine. It is a legacy of superior craftsmanship, determination, and a relentless passion for the overall experience that keeps us focused on leading the way in the boat building industry.