

US owner likes to design and build its own vessels

April 2013 saw Bordelon Marine in the US take delivery of the first example of its 260 Stingray-class dynamically positioned supply vessels which will enable it to grow and move into new markets

Bordelon Marine is well known in the Gulf of Mexico as a provider of marine transportation services to the offshore oil and natural gas industry. The company offers a full range of offshore vessels supporting activity such as construction support, exploration, production, remotely-operated vehicles (ROVs) and dive support, along with oceanographic research and survey. The new vessels will, however, take Bordelon Marine into a new market, and are “part of its natural evolution,” said Wes Bordelon, the company’s president and owner.

“Two years ago we met with our customers to see what kind of vessels they would need in the future,” Mr Bordelon told *OSJ*. “We wanted to see how we could fit into their plans and into the market. We wanted to create and build our own design that really reflects what our clients were telling us they were looking for.”

Connor Bordelon, the first of the dynamically positioned 2 (DP2) multipurpose vessels, was formally named in July and due to have started work shortly afterwards as a well stimulation vessel, working on behalf of Baker Hughes. The second vessel of the new type is due to be delivered early in 2014. All of the vessels are being built at the Bordelon Marine shipyard in Houma, Louisiana.

“We are very excited to introduce the Stingray-class multipurpose PSVs [MPSV],” said Mr Bordelon. “It is a design that incorporates a number of cutting edge features and capabilities that are normally only found in much larger, new-generation vessels. The concept here is to give our clients a more affordable MPSV or light inspection, maintenance and repair/ROV support vessel option.

“We wanted a vessel that was truly a multipurpose, hybrid design that stayed within a reasonable size and cost range to the client. This vessel does that very well.

It offers all of the necessary technology and capabilities, but keeps it all within a 3,200 dwt boat.

“We gave a lot of thought and consideration to the comfort of the mariners when we designed this vessel. You can’t expect them to be safe, smart, and productive unless they are well rested and comfortable with their surroundings. Each stateroom has a private head, individual climate controls, and TV, Internet and phone connections.

“People always ask me why I want to be in the shipbuilding business. It’s expensive and risky, but for us it’s about the boats. If you stay in this business long enough, you develop a genuine affection and appreciation for these boats. We wanted to be able to build a unique vessel that was our design alone, and to the needs and standards of our customers. We also wanted to build the vessel to our own timeline, and make whatever changes we needed, with a focus on quality instead of just price and schedule. Having a shipyard as we do gives you the options to do all of those things.”

The Stingray series vessels are 257ft x 52ft x 18ft with a clear deck of 188ft x 44ft and a maximum speed of 14 knots. They have Cummins QSK 60-M Tier 3 main engines, Schottel Z-Drives and bow thrusters. The Stingray can transport 158,400 gallons of fuel oil, 4,000ft³ of bulk mud, and 10,400 barrels of liquid mud along with potable water. All of the cargo handling systems are fully automated and controlled from the bridge. The vessels can also accommodate up to 40 passengers and have a ROV office and control room. The

Stingray series is also Solas classed, and meets FIFI 1 ACCU, EEP 175 and Tier 3 requirements.

“The Stingray series is really the next step or evolution of Bordelon Marine,” Mr Bordelon said. “These vessels will allow us to compete effectively in the deepwater market in the Gulf of Mexico, and internationally. While it seems everyone is focused on simply going bigger, we made great efforts to look for ways to incorporate today’s requirements into a smaller, more efficient and more affordable vessel package.”

Fuel efficiency was also a key focus of the design process, and as Mr Bordelon explained, the vessels have a sophisticated power management system that allows them to use only the exact amount of thrust or kilowatt power required. “Very simply,” said Mr Bordelon, “if you don’t need the power, you don’t use it. Not burning fuel unnecessarily is not only good for our clients, but good for the environment.”

Mr Bordelon believes that as a mid-sized private player which builds its own vessels, the company has set itself apart. “It’s not the typical model for a company of our size,” he said. “Although there is an intimate and crucial relationship between building and operating modern PSVs, it requires two very different and unique talent sets.

“Managing and supporting these disciplines is ultimately the challenge for a small company. But when you are successful at integrating the two, you are able to produce a much higher quality vessel in terms of construction and functionality, than in other scenarios,” Mr Bordelon concluded. **osj**

All three Stingray-class vessels will have been delivered by early 2014

