

## **Gold Coast Yachts Launches Biggest Boat Yet with STI Power**

STI CEO Dave Tether flew to St. Croix in May to oversee the launch of the largest STI-powered boat to date: “Nostromo”—a 51 foot catamaran built by Gold Coast Yachts. “This is the reason I started this company,” Dave joked as he boarded his flight at BWI airport. “So I could go to the Caribbean and watch someone else work.”

Accompanied by STI execs Charlie Shannon, Ann Poyas and Don Poyas, Dave made sure the new Gold Coast installation met STI specifications before it went to sea. “All kidding aside,” says Dave, “this is a major milestone for us. Although it’s not the heaviest boat we’ve powered so far, it’s the biggest overall. It should go a long way toward answering those who say our motors don’t have the power to play in the big leagues. They do, and they are.”

Gold Coast 50+ footers normally carry a pair of Yamaha 50 hp outboards. Two of our 12 hp ST 74s take their place in “Nostromo”. Each ST74 contains two motors inside the casing fixed to a single shaft that produces 74 lb ft of torque to turn the prop. In “Nostromo” the props are a pair of 18x18s.

Electricity for the big boat’s motors comes from a 12-pack of Lifeline 4D AGM batteries connected in series to provide 144 volts DC. At 210 A-h each, the batteries have a total capacity of 25+ kilowatt hours. A 15 kw water-cooled DC generator from HFL (left) provides backup power.

Although “Nostromo” was still unfinished, and the rudders weren’t connected to the steering gear, she was put into the water to try out the new motors. “The same thing happens every time,” Dave says. “People see our little motors going into these big boats, and think we won’t do five knots in a flat calm. This time, we were still tied up to the dock when I fist tried them out. There were two workers from Gold Coast standing in the stern, and I yelled back at them to hang on tight.

“I baked up as far as the dock lines would let me and then jammed the throttles to full forward. The boat just leaped ahead and nearly flipped the Gold Coast guys off the stern. I slammed the motors immediately into reverse so we wouldn’t tear off the cleats, and the boat jumped back. Water was boiling all around us. The Gold Coast guys both yelled ‘Whoah!’ People watching from a Lagoon tied next to us yelled ‘whoah’ too. [Gold Coast Vice President] Roger Hatfield said, ‘This is going to change everything’.”

Away from the dock, “Nostromo” easily reached 9 knots under power “and that was with the rudders cocked at weird angles,” Dave says. “I think she’ll do 10 once the boat is ready to sail.”

Unlike many of today’s all-plastic boats, Gold Coast catamarans are West System epoxy-and-glass-sheathed wood constructions, the technique developed by the Gougeon Brothers of Michigan. Hull bottoms are strip-planked fir, and topsides, deck and cabin are marine plywood over frames and stringers. The result is very strong and stiff structure that is still extremely light. With a draft of 3’8” and a 29 foot beam, the 51 foot “Nostromo” will displace around 20,000 pounds fully rigged. The company generally builds this class of yacht for the charter market, but “Nostromo’s” owner, Roy Savage, plans to make her his personal boat. Mr. Savage named his boat after the sea captain who was the title character in Joseph Conrad’s epic novel of violence and revolution in South America.

Following “Nostromo’s” sea trials, Gold Coast officials estimated that STI motors would be suitable for virtually every type of boat the company makes except for their high-speed ferries. Gold Coast is another of the growing list of Solomon Technologies OEMs – original equipment manufacturers who install STI electric drive as the original propulsion system in their new boats. The company is known for its out-of-the-box thinking. Besides its signature wing-masted performance and charter cats and tris, Gold Coast also builds unique wave-piercing power cats now in passenger ferry service in the Caribbean and Alaska.

“Gold Coast is the kind of innovative, open-minded builder we’re looking to partner with,” says Dave, “someone who had the engineering knowledge to evaluate our system on the basis of real-world data and isn’t fixated on a conventional diesel’s overblown horsepower ratings. When it comes to turning a propeller, all that matters is how much torque you can put on the shaft.”

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Solomon Technologies, Inc., “Gold Coast Yachts Launches Biggest Boat Yet with STI Power”, [www.solomontechnologies.com](http://www.solomontechnologies.com), 2004.