

investor relations



***Nice 'N' Easy* in Dubrovnik, Croatia, just one stop on the European tour. Inset: The boat's owner John Rosatti.**

American John Rosatti explains to Bransom Beam his approach to yacht investment and recounts his experiences of cruising in the Mediterranean aboard his new Christensen 157 *Nice 'n' Easy* during the 2007 summer season.

John Rosatti says that if Christensen didn't build yachts, he might have considered buying a Feadship, but not much else. But you get the feeling that, had he actually been faced with an alternative, he might have decided not to have bought another yacht at all. This owner's passionate about the yacht he's got.

"I know boats and I've never lost money on one. Before I bought her, I looked at everything — yachts from Trinity, Oceanco, Feadship, Amels, Heesen and Westship," he says.

Rosatti's 30-year-old South African captain, Johannes Buys, confirms it was so. "Mr Rosatti flew me all over the world — from China to Turkey — looking at boats and builders."

In the end, Rosatti settled on a 48m (157ft) Christensen, which he named *Nice 'n' Easy*, and looks at her lovingly as a pleasure vessel for travel and home, but also as a cold calculated investment. And on that basis he says: "I'd stack this boat up against

any European builder — yes, even Feadship."

Rosatti, an American businessman whose business interests range from car dealerships to restaurants, is originally from New York, but now lives in South Florida. He is no newcomer to boats and superyachts in particular and his perspective on yachts, especially owning and operating them in the US and in Europe, provides insight on one experienced owner's take on yachting.

Rosatti manages *Nice 'n' Easy* with his captain, Johannes Buys. Except for Rosatti's secretary in the US, no one else is involved in her management and between Buys and Rosatti, it's difficult to decide who loves her more.

Rosatti is just finishing three months, almost 3,000 miles in and out of almost 50 ports from Spain to Croatia in the Mediterranean aboard *Nice 'n' Easy*.

"I've spent more time on board this boat — six months out of the year in fact — but this is my first time seeing Europe like this; it gives you a totally different perspective," says Rosatti. "Staying in a



hotel you don't see it the same; just arriving by water makes it different; we toured, shopped but stayed on the water; I carried nothing when I flew over from the States, in fact I've been wearing the same shorts or bathing suit since I got here — I haven't had on a real pair of shoes."

In spring this year Rosatti dispatched *Nice 'n' Easy* across the Atlantic in his captain's hands from her snug berth in Fisher Island in Miami via Bermuda and the Azores. After bunkering in Gibraltar, Rosatti joined her in Nice to begin his first-hand lesson in managing an American-built yacht in Europe.

After hosting a party for singer Denise Rich during the Cannes Film Festival, *Nice 'n' Easy* moved on to Monaco to take a front-row berth for the Monaco Grand Prix where the team of Rosatti and Buys got their first lesson in the cost of berthing trackside — surprisingly poor visibility and much noise.

Rosatti, who has raced cars, motorcycles and boats, will do it differently when he returns with *Nice 'n' Easy* in 2008. "Next year I'll berth her in Nice and take a hotel in Monaco, so it's easier to walk around the track."

As his first trip to Europe in his own yacht comes to an end, Rosatti couldn't be happier. "The boat's been great so far; on this trip the only mechanical

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In fact, he's so happy with *Nice 'n' Easy* that he's ordered a new Christensen Custom 160 (49m) Trideck (Hull 36), as well as a 206-footer (63m) to be built in Christensen's new Tennessee yard.

The 160 is being built in Christensen's yard in Vancouver, Washington, with delivery scheduled for early 2010. The 206 though is actually hull 'number one', the first yacht to come out of the new Christensen yard in Greenback, Tennessee. And Rosatti actually feels somewhat responsible for that.

"For my next boat I wanted something over 200 feet and I wanted another Christensen, but they kept coming back with designs for longer boats, but longer boats with the same beam. It turned out they can't build them any wider in their old plant ▶ P92



Above and right: Not your average hairdressing salon; Rosatti cuts his son's hair on the bathing platform. *Nice 'n' Easy* on another scenic stopover.

because of the column spacing or something wrong with the building," he says. "I spoke with Henry Luken and he said they could build a new plant in Tennessee."

And construction on the new Christensen yard started late last year.

Rosatti says that he intends to keep *Nice 'n' Easy* until the completion of Hull 036, at which time she would be sold. He firmly believes that newer yachts, well cared for, sell better.

To say that Rosatti 'knows about boats' is a gross understatement.

"My first boat was a 1976 Cigarette; I raced it offshore," he says.

He then went on to a 17m (55ft) Ocean, which he used to race against friend John Staluppi out to fishing grounds off New York before moving up a 18m (60ft) Hatteras and then buying what was then a big boat, a 34m (112ft) Dennison.

Unfortunately in 1995, like so many yacht owners, he says that he was plagued by crew problems and became a bit disenchanted, which is why he so much appreciates his current crew aboard *Nice 'n' Easy*.

So in 1998 he started building boats in Riviera Beach with his friend and fellow car dealer John Staluppi. The brand of Millennium Superyachts would be big, brash, fast and luxurious.

Between them Staluppi and Rosatti already had a reputation for fast yachts — like the 46kt 34m (110ft) *Thunderball*, 53kt 40m (130ft) *Octopussy* and the 35m (116ft) 66kt-plus *Moonraker*.

So when Rosatti went looking for a yacht he had a reasonably good idea of what he wanted.

The search ended in 2005.

"I went to the Palm Beach show. Henry Luken had *Liquidity*, as she was named then, at the show but she wasn't for sale. My broker suggested I take a look. When Dawn and I walked on board we knew right away."

In the end Rosatti convinced Luken to sell and commissioned her *Nice 'n' Easy* at the 2005 Ft Lauderdale International Boat Show.

Rosatti says he was attracted to the boat by what he saw as an exceptional level of quality and details like the walnut paneling and nickel-insert marble work and the trademark Christensen elevator, which both he and captain Buys says, besides taking guests to all four levels, is a great help in handling stores.

"This boat is better than a Feadship," he suggests, sounding all of a car dealer. "Just look at the woodwork." Passionate indeed!

Ironically after Rosatti's lifetime of speed on the water, *Nice 'n' Easy* being composite is actually quite a heavy boat with a cruising speed of a modest, for Rosatti anyway, 16 knots. But he likes composite. "No condensation, no rust and no vibration noise."

He was also looking for space and believes he gets one more stateroom in *Nice 'n' Easy* than he would if she were the same size and built of either aluminium or steel.

Rosatti takes a great interest in *Nice 'n' Easy's* plant, especially as it relates to cost of maintenance and resale value, so sees a great benefit that one of her three gensets is relatively small.

"We run that one the most; that's 65kW; if ▶▶ P94



"Rosatti takes a great interest in *Nice 'n' Easy's* plant, especially as it relates to running costs."

**“Sailing on her own bottom...
It’s a trade-off... I wasn’t so happy
putting that time on the engines,
but the price difference was huge.”**

Right: Captain Johannes Buys. Below: Traveling through the Corinth Canal, which separates the Peloponnesian peninsula from the Greek mainland. Bottom right: Even deck drains carry Christensen Shipyard’s logo.

that goes,” says Rosatti, “it’s small enough that four of us can unbolt it, carry it out and drag a new one back into the engine room.”

Sitting in Europe as the thermometer was pushing through 100°F, Rosatti also believes the insulating characteristics of composite saved him lots of money on air-conditioning, which has also been trouble-free.

“Too many boats need fixing all the time; in the two years that I’ve had *Nice ‘n’ Easy* I haven’t had a problem — she’s not been a headache at all.”

Of course, it helps if you have an understanding and more importantly an appreciation for engines

and other things mechanical. So Rosatti’s background and Buys’s qualification as an engineer is a great benefit.

Rosatti says that he always starts his tours in her engine-room, which in *Nice ‘n’ Easy* is a pristine and gleaming temple of marine engineering.

In fact, one of the few modifications he made when he bought her was to refinish both of her MTU diesels and all of the engine-room ducting in polished stainless steel, which is not so surprising given that she’s owned now by a car dealer. Come to think of it, ever buy a used car that didn’t look good under the hood (bonnet)?

“When we bought her, this trip to Europe was in the back of our mind, we’d been doing the usual Florida to New York or Maine every year,” he says, “I wanted a boat that was strong enough to cross the Atlantic on her own; loading your boat onto a ship can cause damage.”

And of course damage can affect resale. But crossing the Atlantic welded to the deck of a semi-submersible is also more expensive and Rosatti has done his maths on that one. Rosatti figures that compared with something like US\$200,000 to ship *Nice ‘n’ Easy* to Europe, sailing her across on her own bottom instead from Miami to Nice via Bermuda, the Azores and Gibraltar cost only US\$75,000 for fuel.

“It’s a trade-off. I wasn’t so happy putting **» P96**



that time on the engines, but the price difference was huge; anyway the first engine overhaul is 25,000 hours."

Again, from the perspective of a car dealer, it should not be surprising that he wants to keep *Nice 'n' Easy's* hours down on the engines, just as you might want to minimise how much you drive your new Ferrari. Rosatti knows that low engine hours in yachts, just like low mileage in cars, means higher resale prices. But while counting pennies, he also believes in carrying plenty of American spares, particularly filters.

"Always, always leave port at 100 per cent," he admonishes. "You should have at least a spare impeller and belt for each pump, but we always carry spare pumps."

It might seem an impossible challenge to make a luxury yacht make economic sense, but not for Rosatti.

"I bought her to use her, but for me *Nice 'n' Easy* is an investment. I will keep her another two or three years," he says.

Rosatti confirms that each year it costs from 15-20 per cent of the purchase price to operate a yacht properly.

"But here in the Med it's a whole different story," he says.



Nice 'n' Easy's bridge.

"I bought her to use but she's an investment."

Nice 'n' Easy's vital stats

Builder:	Christensen Shipyards
Launch Year:	2005
Draft (Full Load):	8ft (2.44m)
LOA:	157ft (47.85m)
LWL:	140ft (42.67m)
Displacement:	355 tons (499gt)
Main Propulsion:	2x1,800hp MTU 12V4000
Generators:	2xNorthern Lights 99kW, 1,800rpm; 1x65kW 1,800rpm
Max Speed:	17.5kt
Range:	4,500nm @ 11kt
Beam:	29.6ft (8.99m)
Accommodation:	6 staterooms
Crew:	9-12

Rosatti believes the right crew is essential to enjoying yachting, and from his perspective that means seeing her run well and be perfectly maintained. But he acknowledges that crew problems probably drive a lot of people out of yachting.

"It can become a real Peyton Place," he says, referring to the American novel and movie that has become synonymous with discord and intrigue. "While we were in Cannes I sat watching the crew on another boat setting up for a party. As they laid out the drinks, they were out of uniform drinking them as well. My crew wouldn't do that... I have a great crew now."

He credits this to Buys, who Rosatti sees as his 'marine manager'.

"He has never made me feel uncomfortable in my boat; I listen to him," Rosatti says. "I give him the same authority to make decisions that I give to all of my managers — I like things my way, but I let them try theirs."

Captain Buys comes from a farming background and believes he learned leadership from working with the farm hands on his father's farm.

"As a yacht captain you always have to remember who you're working for, if the boss can't trust you with one dollar, he shouldn't be trusting you with his yacht," says Buys, who keeps *Nice 'n' Easy* accounts on Quicken before sending them to Rosatti's accountant in Florida. "The hardest thing to do in this job is to keep people happily working together."

Nice 'n' Easy has 24/7 satellite broadband so the crew can keep in touch with home for free on Skype.

Not surprisingly, when Johannes Buys suggested to Rosatti that he hire another crew member to handle the extra anchor watches he expected in Europe Rosatti approved. It also means the crew gets one day in four off.



Pristine power: The MTUs and ducting have been refinished with stainless steel.

“The big problem for an American-built boat is many of the parts can only be bought in the US; chandlers here just don’t the same stuff.”

Perhaps it is somewhat ironic that unlike some Americans who choose non-US flags for their yachts for tax reasons, Rosatti says he chose the Cayman Islands, so he could employ this crew.

Managing a boat out of US waters and particular in through almost 50 ports in three months in the Mediterranean has been the most recent challenge for the management team of Rosatti and Buys who have learned to depend on local agents.

“Before we left, all we did was change the TV receivers and stock up on frozen meat,” says Buys. “When we got to Europe and saw the price of Coke meat, we wished we’d stocked up more on that stuff. The big problem for an American-built boat is many

of the parts can only be bought in the US; chandlers here just don’t have the same stuff.”

Rosatti observes: “When we first arrived I told my captain to just call the marinas directly and speak to the dockmaster to get a berth; we got nowhere; we’d leave our number at the marina, but it would be the local agent who’d call us back anyway.”

In fact, they found agents can take care of anything (except the cost of meat), for a price, although in Croatia everyone seemed to prefer cash instead of credit cards. “Boating here is the same, but language is the problem — the agents speak English,” Rosatti says. “They help because we don’t like to plan it all out — you don’t know until you get there and talk to people.”

Buys confirms: “We never know exactly where we’re going to go and once we get there, how long we’ll stay... If the boss likes a place we might stay another day.”

But all good things come to an end and while ‘Rosatti the enthusiast’ says he’ll be back next year in *Nice ‘n’ Easy*, ‘Rosatti the businessman’ says that *Nice ‘n’ Easy* will be sold when his new Christensen is delivered. But listening to him talk about her, you get the feeling there may be more to that decision than just hard dollars-and-cents. And for captain Buys who is busy helping Rosatti with specs for the new boats, you suspect *Nice ‘n’ Easy* is more than just a job.

“I hate to go anywhere without *Nice ‘n’ Easy*; I feel at home when I’m aboard her. When I leave to go back home, I don’t get this service,” says Rosatti.

Investment or not, Rosatti wouldn’t be the first person to have more than one. □