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Saunders Recognized for Refit Excellence

Gulf Shores, Ala. – February 5, 2016 – Saunders Yachtworks was presented with the Best Accomplishment in Refit Excellence Award at the first Refit International Exhibition & Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. The company was nominated for completing a refit on the *Quiteña*, a 62-foot 2014 Viking Convertible.

The *Quiteña* was originally outfitted for sportfishing in the Gulf of Mexico, but the new owner and San Diego resident, Paul Fruchbom, wished to modify the boat to accommodate fishing in the Pacific Ocean, while retaining the 2014 Viking construction standard. Saunders was selected for the project after visiting the boat in Rockport, Texas, and submitting a proposal to Tom Powell of Seaside Yacht Management, who had the responsibility for selecting the contractor.

“I can’t express how proud I am of our whole team,” Saunders CEO John Fitzgerald said. “This project included completing our work, coordinating with subcontractors, and overcoming obstacles while working on a short timeline with high owner expectations. We were honored that Mr. Fruchbom selected our yard, and we put a lot of pressure on ourselves to deliver an outstanding result.”

Among the 95 separate operations on the work order, the Saunders team designed, constructed and installed a custom storage box in the salon ceiling that stores up to 14 outfitted fishing rods and reconfigured the bow with the construction and installation of a full pulpit to match a Viking production. Additionally, the transom was transformed with airbrushed faux teak, yellow tail fish accents and the new name in gold leaf lettering. Along with 31 Saunders employees, the project included six different subcontract companies providing specialty trades.

“For the three-month experience, I was treated professionally and ethically, and most importantly, staff really listened to my desires to make sure they got it right,” Fruchbom said. “(Saunders is) a top-notch yard with wonderful, highly skilled people who made a complex, time-consuming job as painless as possible.”

According to show organizers, an independent panel of judges selected the refit award winners based not only on the finished yacht, but on the teamwork, problem solving and efficiency of everyone involved in the refit, including the boatyard, captain, owner, designer, surveyor and management.

The Saunders family has been in the marine service business in coastal Alabama since 1959. The company operates a full-service yacht yard with a 165-ton lift in Gulf Shores and a 60-ton lift in Orange Beach. Saunders offers a full array of capabilities, including propulsion engine repowers, boatyard crafts, and exterior and interior refits for vessels up to 130 feet. For more information, please visit www.saundersyacht.com.

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