

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



It began at a young age, love for the water and a fascination with boats. Boating, fishing camping... it was instilled in me early on. Around 7, I learned to water ski on the Tennessee River, a hobby I grew to love and enjoy for many years. I remember dreams of skiing Cypress Gardens. While I never got

close, I did become comfortable at 22' off on our local lake's slalom course. If not on my Jobe, I most likely had a Zebco 33 in my hands. Brim, Crappie, Bass, Catfish... it didn't matter back then as long as something was tugging on my line. Obviously, by the species mentioned, this was all fresh water fun. As an early teen, Florida became a favorite travel destination for my family so the introduction to salt, bigger waters and larger boats began. My parents laughed at the fact we always had to stop at any marina we passed on our travels to "walk the docks." The love for boats was always there and would only grow with age.

Let me now mix in career a little. I won't go into details but in general those wonderful parents I mentioned, my late father Bill and my always supportive mother Donna, as they say, "spent a lot of money for me to be a stock broker only for me to ultimately play with magazines." While I loved and still obsess about the market, it was a little magazine "Auto Show" I published in college that would bring me full circle 15 years later. In 2003, my brother Jason and I launched the first VIP Magazine in our hometown Jackson, TN. The concept quickly began to grow as we partnered with other publishers to grow the VIP brand.

While I could literally write a book about the next 20 years, it basically looks something like 6 states, 14 magazine launches, 900 plus issues, 8 million copies and roughly 30 million readers. This took a lot of wonderful, dedicated staff, family, and publishing partners while creating a lifetime of memories along the way!

One of those early launches that would impact me for life was VIP Pickwick Lake Magazine in 2004. It was where I really cut my teeth in the boating world having the privilege to spend several years working and traveling with my friend, David Woods and Pier 57 Offshore Racing. The other title I launched in 2013 that would have the ultimate influence on my path was VIP Destin Magazine. After years and many miles of back and forth, Maggie and I finally moved to Santa Rosa Beach in early 2020. While unforeseen circumstances that year may have delayed the ultimate goal, it would not be denied. I say all of this so you might understand why having the privilege to combine my love for boating and publishing into this premiere issue of "BOAT SOUTH Magazine" is truly a blessing and a dream come true.

BOATSOUTH.com was one of hundreds of domains I purchased back in the day of my obsession with .coms. I always knew it was special and hoped someday I could develop a product around it and that day has finally come. The vision for BOAT SOUTH is to provide boaters, fishermen and water lovers along the Gulf

Coast a product that ultimately encompasses all. From kayaks to sport fishing yachts and everything in between, the love for anything nautical is the common line!