



## Stewart (Stu) Jones President and Founder, Florida Powerboat Club

Stewart (Stu) Jones, President and Founder of the Florida Powerboat Club, shares with us the story of his tourism success:

### How did you get your start in tourism?

I was born and raised in Ontario, and made various trips to Florida with the family as a teen, and soon fell in love with the Sunshine State. One of my favorite pastimes was powerboating, and Florida seemed to offer the best opportunities in this arena.

### When did you begin your Florida tourism career?

At the age of 30, I immigrated to Florida taking a job with a marine marketing firm in Fort Lauderdale. With a focus on making boating my lifestyle, I founded Florida Powerboat Club in 1993, and have been at the helm ever since. What a ride!

### What defining moment led you to your current point in your career?

I believe the defining moment was in 1996 when I decided that I needed to show the world what the Florida powerboating lifestyle was all about. I began producing television coverage of all my boating events.

### Can you tell us more about your television show?

"Powerboating in Paradise TV" began broadcasting on SunSports and it really showed Floridians and out-of-state visitors how great the boating is in Florida. We used live video, actual boaters (not actors) and scenic vistas that were captured using helicopters and professional crews.

### What do you teach people who are interested in your industry?

My guidelines are to learn your craft, master your skills, and excel in every aspect of what you are promoting. When people want to learn about boating, I teach the safety. I teach them how to not run aground, maintain safe speeds, and understand tides, weather and current. I teach people how to be a SMART boater in order to have safe and fun boating weekend.

### Who were the people that influenced your career?

I was always self-driven and self-motivated, but in the early years I had help from many people in the marine business who really encouraged me to keep going. I founded the Club with a German boater named Wolfgang, who provided an official Paceboat. There was a marina that sponsored my startup, called Sunny Isles in North Miami. Another sponsor was Daryle Scott, founder of Venus Swimwear in Jacksonville, who also provided me with his 38 Cigarette Powerboat to stage our events.

### What excites you most about your job?

I like the variety of the responsibilities I have, and there are never two days alike. Along with planning club boating events and meeting thousands of people in the course of all the events and promotions we conduct, I have enjoyed the media side of the business immensely.

### What does the media side of your business entail?

As editor/publisher of our powerboating magazine since 1999, I am forced to be a creative writer/photographer. But the most exciting part about media has been producing three lifestyle TV series, two of which are boating themed and the other is motorcycle-themed.

### What advice would you give to someone considering a career in tourism?

Find an area of tourism that ties in closely with our own personal passions and hobbies. This way you will always be surrounded by something you love. That passion will only grow as you become more an expert in your field. Tourism is all about the trust the customer/traveler places in their travel adviser, be it a travel agent, a tour director, golf pro, or a boat captain. Tourists want great experiences and great memories, but they also like to learn and be educated along the way!

### Tell us something unique or interesting about your life outside of your job.

Due to my career change at 30 years old, from Canadian trucking industry to Florida marine industry, I am a late starter in family life. So it's a little comical that I am now 55 years of age, and father to 8 and 10 year old boys! Even though my career/job is fast-paced, the unique part of my life outside that Job is that my family life is also 100 mph! Some would think I would enjoy relaxation when not working, but it's the opposite. Along with boating, we like to go go-kart racing and taking out the RV.