

# Behind Shed Doors: Discovering Delta Marine

Historically remaining under the radar where publicity is concerned, **Georgia Tindale** goes behind the scenes with Delta Marine’s Vice President, **Michelle Jones**, as the US shipyard enters its open era.



DELTA MARINE

Founded by brothers Ivor and Jack Jones on Seattle’s Duwamish River in 1967, Delta Marine started its life building commercial fishing boats capable of surviving the turbulent waters of the Pacific Northwest. Developing on its success in the fishing sector, Delta Marine shifted tack and began building hardy, luxury expedition yachts capable of taking owners all around the world, with a particular focus on custom builds from the mid 1980s onwards.

Fast forward to 2025, and the yard continues to be owned and operated by the Jones family, with over 600 vessels across the commercial and private sectors delivered to date, including 52 yachts. Delta Marine is particularly well-known for its expertise in composite construction, having delivered numerous notable all-composite yachts. This includes the first over 100’, the 32-metre John Schubert-designed *Princess Gloria* in 1990, now known as *Penelope*, which underwent an extensive refit at the yard in 2008 to boost her exterior spaces, as well as extending her to 35.6 metres.

Delta Marine’s Vice President, Michelle Jones, explains more: “The composite construction techniques pioneered for our early fishing fleet have evolved considerably over the last 50 years. We are currently producing yachts using an advanced composite process called vacuum resin infusion that rivals the aerospace industry’s latest techniques for building structures with ultra-high strength-to-weight ratios.

She continues: “This enables greater performance, whether through higher speeds, longer range, or increased

efficiency. This is particularly prevalent in our latest custom 110’ yacht series, where building lightweight is paramount to performance.”

The first in this custom yacht series touched water in May, the 110’ (33.53 metre) motor yacht *Vagabond*. Built entirely in-house, *Vagabond’s* brand new hull platform is Delta’s first to be wholly designed using Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) and is optimised for long-range efficiency and high performance.

Created in response to what Jones describes as a “growing demand for fully custom yachts in the 110-125 foot range”, although *Vagabond* was designed as custom yacht for a specific owner – a family of experienced boaters looking to explore the Pacific Northwest and beyond with minimal crew – its flexible platform will be used as foundation for future Delta builds. This can be tailored to suit a wide range of performance goals and lifestyles. To name just one example: “We’ve been working with an Italian studio on a Delta 125’ longtail – a striking design that’s sure to turn heads when we unveil her in the coming months,” explains Jones.

Indeed, despite being proud of its formidable in-house design team, increasing its collaborations with external designers fits Delta’s broader effort to integrate new ideas and voices into its future design process. “We believe there’s a real opportunity to blend Delta’s American craftsmanship with European design,” Jones highlights.

On the subject of global reach, although Delta markets itself globally, the



The Delta Marine team in front of 73.1-metre *Laurel* before her launch in 2006. At the time of her launch, she was the largest yacht built in the US in 75 years

WILLIAM WRIGHT

**“We believe there’s a real opportunity to blend Delta’s American craftsmanship with European design”**



DELTA MARINE

majority of its clients hail from the US. “Many of our clients are based in the US, and we’ve found that the American market aligns well with our approach”, says Jones. Tackling the inevitable topic of import tariffs, Jones remains upbeat: “We always keep a close eye on tariffs, but the value of American craftsmanship and our custom capabilities continue to speak for themselves.”

With five projects currently in build at Delta, this includes the unique exploration vessel, *Project Zembra*, slated for delivery in 2026. Commissioned by owners with a passion for adventure and exploration – and who are also licensed pilots and certified submarine operators to boot – Delta Marine was tasked with creating a yacht capable of supporting aerial and underwater exploration, alongside the more typical wellness and entertainment requirements. All of this is packed into just 148 feet (45 metres).

Task accepted, Delta rose to the challenge and managed to accommodate a helipad, a U-Boat Worx submersible and an ICON A5 amphibious aircraft into the composite *Project Zembra*. This will be built on Delta’s full-displacement hull platform and used both privately and for charter.

Historically, Delta Marine has captured the industry’s attention with many milestone builds, including the completion of larger steel and composite projects such as the 73.2-metre *Laurel* (2006) and the 79.2-metre *Albatross* (originally launched in 2016 and now known as *Moonstone*), and can take on projects up to 100 metres.



The Delta Marine founders, Ivor and Jack Jones, who founded in the yard in 1967 in Seattle.

DELTA MARINE



Right: The newly launched 33.53-metre *Vagabond*, delivered this Spring, the 73.1-metre *Laurel*  
Below: The 35.66-metre *Princess Gloria*, now *Penelope*, launched in 1990

NEIL RABINOWITZ



NEIL RABINOWITZ

WILLIAM WRIGHT



While Delta has had some large notable deliveries, including *Laurel* and *Albatross*, it has continued to expand its fleet of all-composite builds similar to *Triton* (2004, 49.7 metres), *Rochade* (2011, 47.55 metres) and the 50-metre *Arianna* (2012). Jones explains further: “This range of yachts represents a highly active segment of our market and remains a central focus for us. We continue to consider projects over 200 feet depending on our production schedule.”

Uniquely positioned on the USA West Coast since its foundation almost 60 years ago, Jones explains that the Pacific Northwest continues to play a major role in Delta Marine’s identity today. “It’s a region known for outdoor adventure, innovation, and natural beauty—all of which show up in the types of yachts we build and the clients we attract. Many of our owners are explorers at heart. They want vessels that are seaworthy, capable, and built to perform in a variety of conditions.”

Notably, all of these qualities are brought to life in Delta Marine’s latest launch, *Vagabond*, which touched water in May 2025. Featuring a flush-mounted anchor system and walk-around side decks, alongside an articulating swim platform and swim garage, every detail has been carefully considered to support both adventure and ease of use. It is also the first Delta project to meet full IMO III and EPA Tier 4 requirements. Despite strict requirements to keep the majority of its projects out of the spotlight before today, Delta Marine anticipates a more open approach to its builds going forward. This is excellent news for those of us curious about what goes on behind the shed doors of its sizable 25-acre shipbuilding facility.

“While many of our past projects have remained under wraps due to client confidentiality, we’re now entering a period where more of our owners are open to sharing their yachts with the industry. This is a truly exciting chapter for us as we open our doors wider than ever before!” says Jones. ●



The 47.55-metre *Rochade* launched in 2011

WILLIAM WRIGHT



WILLIAM WRIGHT

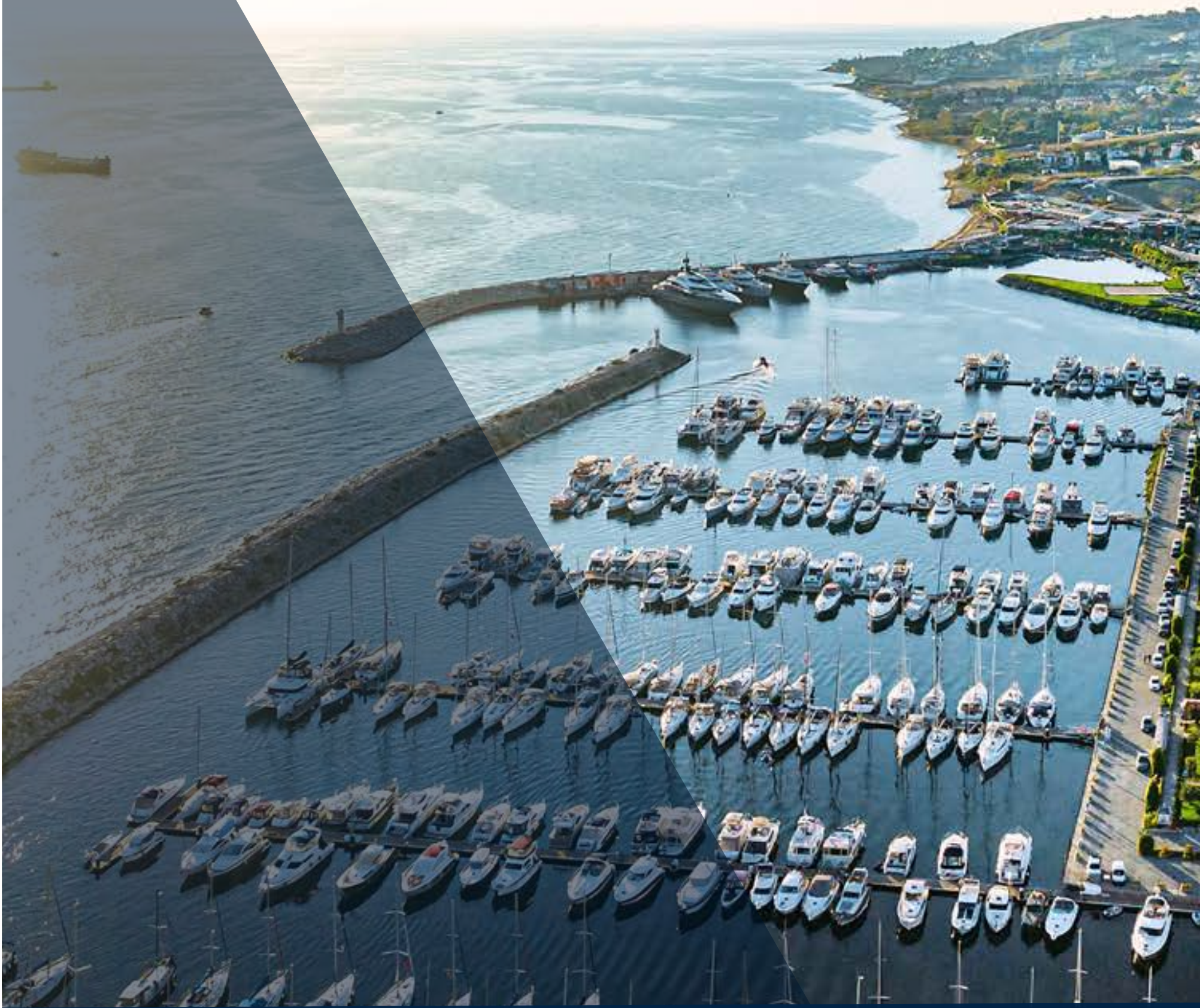


The newly launched 33.53-metre *Vagabond*, delivered this Spring. Above, the yacht is seen at the shipyard in-build.

WILLIAM WRIGHT

# West Istanbul Marina - Your Yacht's Second Wind.

At West Istanbul Marina, we're passionate about what we do. With decades of experience and state-of-the-art technology, we offer a comprehensive range of services tailored to your yacht's needs.



West Istanbul Marina

+90 212 850 22 00

@westistanbul\_marina

www.westistanbulmarina.com

N 40°57'46" E 28°39'49" VHF 72

Yakuplu Marmara Mah.

Ulusum Cad. no. 22

Beylikdüzü İstanbul

34524, Türkiye



WHERE YACHTS ARE REBORN...