

## BOATS

### Double Down

By Capt. Patrick Sciacca



A megayacht fisherman with a reported high-40-knot speed.

Would you like a tower station that's accessed from a retractable internal ladder? Maybe radar arrays and antennas stealthily built into composite wings on that tower? Or perhaps LCD glass windows in the cabin and saloon that can be darkened with the flip of a switch (no blinds required)? How about triple 2,400-hp diesels that propel a fully equipped battlewagon to nearly 50 knots? Well, one owner wanted all of the above and a bit more, and with just one phone call his vision became a custom-build first.

It all began in early 2004 with an avid Northeast-based angler who was looking for a custom, enclosed-bridge sportfisherman and dialed up yacht designer Stephen French and his team from Stuart, Florida-based Applied Concepts Unleashed (ACU). French and crew are no strangers to one-off sportfishermen; they've been the company's bread and butter for two-plus decades. If names like Garlington, F&S, Briggs, Miller, Spencer, and Sculley ring a bell, then you've seen or heard of ACU, and these builders represent just a portion of the company's work. In fact, if it's custom, fishy, sleek, sporty, and sexy, chances are French's crew has had a hand in designing at least part of it.

But this owner wanted a boat that looked like nothing that had come before her, one that was fast, fishable, and oh—how about making her around 86 feet LOA?

French, whose work I've seen first-hand, pumps out design ideas at a wicked-fast pace, but also with an artist's touch. Listening to the owner's request, French replied that he had a battlewagon with a powderhorn sheerline that forms a single unbroken line from stem to stern ready to go. He admitted that it had been drawn about ten years earlier, but assured the owner it would fit the bill.

The owner agreed to look at the drawing, which French says was "way ahead of its time," adding "[It] would be modern even in 2010 and beyond." Upon viewing the decade-old concept dubbed "86 Unleashed" (now *Double Down*), it was love at first sight. French recalls that the owner said simply, "That's it. Let's build it." (If all multi-year, multi-million-dollar projects were committed to so easily.)

Like most of French's work, the 86 Unleashed started with the waveform hull bottom. It's been around a long time and is most notably associated with Garlington. Unlike many hulls that employ

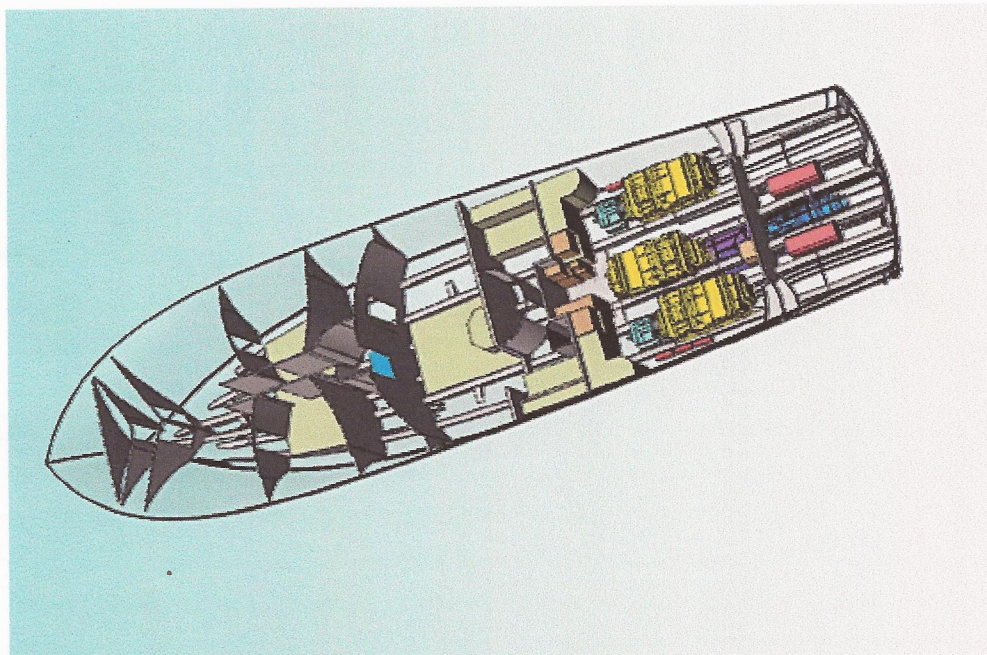
**Builder:** OTHER  
**Boat Type:** Sportfisherman  
**LOA:** 23'6"  
**Beam:** 86'0"  
**Draft:** 4'6"  
**Displacement:** 180,000 lbs (full load)  
**Standard Power:** 3/2,400-hp MTU 16V 2000s  
**Fuel Capacity:** 5,000 gallons  
**Water Capacity:** 350 gallons  
**Price:** not available  
**Cabins:** 1 master; 6 guest

concavity or convexity from chine to the keel, a waveform hull is both concave and convex, with the convex sections generally closer to the keel. In cross-section the hull shape resembles a wave, hence the name. According to French, the unique combination of these surfaces produces enhanced performance, stability, load-carrying capability, and trim.

In addition, the waveform hull is said to possess excellent resistance to roll and to plane easily at moderate speeds. And finally, the shape is famous for helping vessels achieve top speeds of up to 60-plus knots and go faster in rough conditions. Who wouldn't want that?

To maximize performance, the owner matched the slippery hull form with three 2,400-hp MTU diesels, the port and starboard of which are V-drives while the center is hooked up to a Doen waterjet. Besides producing near go-fast speeds, this setup lets the owner get home on the waterjet alone while using the bow thruster for steering, should both props be damaged. He can also troll using just the jet.

The 86 was predicted to hit about 50 knots with a displacement of 135,000 pounds, says French. But as gear and toys were added, the boat naturally got heavier. By the time she was done, her full-load displacement had ballooned to about 180,000 pounds, including nearly 35,000 pounds of liquid (5,000 gallons of diesel and 350 gallons of water). As a result, she just missed hitting the 50-knot mark, but is reported to speed along somewhere in the high 40s. (French won't give away the exact number but does say she exceeded the performance predictions for her final weight.)



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# Double Down Page 2

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Aside from her megayacht size and go-fast speed, this completely jig-built composite (E-glass, carbon fiber, Nidacore, Corecell) vessel features an unusual top structure that's been dubbed the "monolithic tower" by ACU. French explains that his team didn't want to spend time designing a vessel with sleek lines only to have it clash with an erector-set-looking tower. The result is what you see these pages. But there was a catch. Double Down's owner also wanted it safe for children to access the tower, so he had an electrically activated retractable ladder that extends from the enclosed-bridge installed in the headliner making it safe to enter the tower even underway. And the tower's high enough for adults and children to stand in it comfortably.

Just as the designers worked to blend the tower with the hull's exterior, they also gave a lot of attention to the vessel's interior arrangement. Generally when a custom boat is built, furniture is fitted and positioned in its allocated space much the way the furniture in your home is. French says the idea on the 86, however, was to blend the furnishings into the bulkheads, "...the goal being that you feel that your are on an object of speed, that all [of the vessel's] elements lend to that speed, not just tolerate it." Everything in the boat—from the fixtures to the furniture—has been shaped to flow with the vessel's interior contours. As a result, everything appears seamless.

So she's a behemoth boat with so many gadgets and doohickeys that James Bond would be jealous. (Yes, I'm jealous, too.) But she's also a perfect example of what happens when desire meets ingenuity. And that's what helps push the boatbuilding technology envelope.

So to the owner of that 86 Unleashed I ask, how about a 95-footer? I have some ideas about a livewell-swimming pool-dance floor-soccer field that I'd like to run by you.

◀ Double Down

up

## It Takes a Village...

With any project of this size and scope, the ability of one builder to complete all of the required tasks has to be questioned. But thanks to its 20 years of experience in custom-boat design and construction, computer-aided design, and 3-D modeling software, French's team was able to come up with a scale model from which files for all of the 86's jigs were taken. Because the scale of the yacht was spot-on, ACU could send the boat specs and jig files to multiple vendors who then used them to build different components. But while the boat's modules and/or parts were constructed at separate facilities, they fit like a glove when brought together as everyone was working off the same information. Noted custom builder Tribute Performance Boats built the hull and house and dealt with the installation of the triple-engine propulsion system. A company called Perfect Match was brought in for all the fairing work, and SR Marine Interiors handled all of the soft goods. In addition, French says multiple companies were involved in the entertainment and electronics systems, adding, "The credits might end up