

New Indoor Boat & RV Storage System

Boat owners have a protective nature when it comes to that most prized possession: their boat. It's important for them to protect that investment and have the assurance that their boat will be safe and readily available for the next voyage. With dry-stack storage, dealers can offer them such assurances.

The marina industry continues to evolve from wet storage to dry storage and from ground storage to rack storage. Rack storage has traditionally been accessible on the marina grounds. There has been outside storage to cover and enclose off the racked boats in a barn on the marina property. (view our Marina section)

However, there is a new development and variation of "Dry Stack" coming on the scene. It's called "Remote Dry Storage." Remote dry storage refers to facilities that are located away from high-cost waterfront areas. They offer excellent opportunities for the boat dealer, who can now offer his customers a place to store and protect boats.

Gold Key Storage in El Dorado Hills, Calif., is one of the first to recognize the value in offering economical off-site, enclosed storage for boats and trailers. Gold Key is a two-year-old, "fourth generation" storage facility located on about three acres with another eight adjoining acres planned for expansion.

The term "fourth generation" means that it is able to provide: (1) a state-of-the-art public storage building; (2) security cameras and door alarms; (3) after-hour access, (4) and a temperature and humidity-controlled section for wine storage. The clean, highly polished floors and fully lit hallways remind one more of a hospital than a storage building.

Gold Key's story begins about two years ago when Brad Mello with D. E. Grenade, an architectural design group located in Shingle Springs, Calif., approached us at Wiggins Lift Co. Mello wanted to know if there was a dry storage company that was stacking both boats and trailers. Turns out there is. A small marina in Portland, Ore., has been doing this for some time. A meeting was soon held in Portland with all interested parties, including Brian McCarthy, an entrepreneur looking for a good investment in the boating industry.

McCarthy observed that with more and more cities enforcing regulations prohibiting motor homes, trailers and boats from being stored in plain view from the street, there is a growing need for an affordable and secure way to store them. McCarthy believed there was a market for safe, secure, covered storage for recreational vehicles at an affordable price. His theory proved correct. Gold Key's new barn is nearly full and there are already plans to add to the facility.

How it works

The concept of remote storage is a simple one. First you must find property away from the water

where the land is properly zoned for storage, preferably 15 to 30 minutes from a boat launch. Next, a building must be designed with racks to stack both boats and trailers in order to maximize the number of boats stored and to offer protection from the elements and vandals.

Gold Key called Dale Gilbert at Roof and Rack, one of the nation's top boat storage design and building company, in Boca Raton, Fla., to help them design and build their storage building. The Wiggins Marina Bull™ was used to stack both boat and trailer successfully. It's forks and carriage are designed to efficiently handle both boat and trailer and permits the operator to safely stack them up to six high.

Gold Key has a drop-off area where customers can leave a boat or trailer. This acts as a staging area so the operator can retrieve them in a timely manor. The operator attaches the trailer to a ball-hitch mounted on the fork of a small industrial forklift. He then pushes the trailer onto a portable loading ramp designed by Wiggins Lift Company. The boat and trailer is then lifted off the ramp by the Marina Bull™ and placed in it's designated rack where it stays until it's owner calls to have it retrieved and ready for pick up. If there is a need to pick up or drop off after hours, Gold Key provides their customers with a secured keyless entry area.

As the leader in the marina lift industry, Wiggins Lift Company has consulted with many boat dealers. Dealers have indicated that if they can tell potential customers where they can keep their boats when they aren't in use, they could probably sell more boats. The days of being able to park a boat and trailer on the street are quickly becoming a thing of the past. When a boater spends \$15,000 to \$60,000 for a boat, he expects to be able to protect that investment and keep it like new as long as he can. The "remote storage" business can offer an affordable way of doing just that.

There are new challenges to be met everyday as the dry-stack industry continues to evolve but with challenges come incredible opportunities for innovation, improvement and profits.