

Inland Boat Stack Storage

Cost effective and 'green' construction



Boatrack storage with trailer - stern



Boatrack storage with trailer - bow



RV - Trailer - Asile Utilization



Marine forklift with boat & trailer



Marine forklift with boat & trailer - 2nd level



Marine forklift with boat & trailer - 3rd level

RV storage and lower land costs help make viable projects

INLAND DRY STORAGE IS AN OPTION THAT DESERVES YOUR ATTENTION

BY JEROME A. KONCEL

Today's marina industry is undergoing many changes, evolving from wet storage to dry storage, from ground storage to rack storage. Rack storage has traditionally been available on a marina's grounds, but there is another option called "remote/inland dry storage."

For marina owners looking to protect a boater's prized possession, the concept of inland or remote dry storage sounds great. It is particularly appealing because marina owners can develop the facility without undergoing a long and confusing permit process.

Business strategy

Although inland or remote dry storage is not prevalent throughout the United States, it is not a new concept. This concept has been implemented in various parts of the country for more than 15 years. In its simplest terms, it's a storage facility for boats located away from high-cost waterfront areas.

Who's the target market? Boat owners who trailer their boats to the water. Typically speaking, these owners have boats that are 18' to 22' long. They can be comfortably described as "small boat owners who are looking for other places to store their boats besides high-price dry stack storage, boat condominiums, and yacht clubs."

What type of facility would be acceptable to this market and are there existing examples of such facilities? Yes, the one this article highlights is Gold Key Boathouse in Placerville, Calif. Although only three years old, it is one of the first businesses to recognize the value of offering economical off-site, enclosed storage for boats and trailers in California.

Gold Key Boathouse is not actually a single building, but rather a series of buildings on eight acres in Placerville, Calif. It has state-of-the-art public storage buildings that are temperature and



Boats on trailer are moved to a ramp staging area prior to being lifted by a forklift or towed to a customer waiting area.



A boat on a trailer is lifted to a rack at Gold Key Boathouse. Notice how the side doors slide open for depositing the boat and trailer.



Interior shot shows a boat and trailer in a rack at Gold Key Boathouse.

humidity controlled, with security cameras and door alarms, and after-hours access. The clean, highly polished floors and fully lit hallways are more reminiscent of a hospital than a storage building. It houses RVs on the ground floor and boats on trailers in racks above the RVs.

History

About five years ago, the dry storage concept picked up momentum and became more feasible in California as waterfront prices soared. In addition, more and more cities in the state began enforcing regulations prohibiting motor homes, trailers, and boats from being

stored either on the street or on a person's property. Finally, a forklift manufacturer came up with a way to easily move boats and trailers in and out of a storage facility.

Gold Key Boathouse began with a developer looking to find property away from the water, preferably 15 to 30 minutes from a boat launch, where the land was properly zoned for storage. Gold Key discovered several places in Dorado Hills that fit this location criteria. It was also an area where there was a severe shortage of slips for storing boats, specifically small boats.

Next, the developer looked to design a building with racks to stack both boats and trailers in order to maximize the number of boats stored, as well as to offer protection from the elements and vandals. To do this, the developer called Dale Gilbert, then with Roof and Rack in Boca Raton, Fla., one of the nation's top boat storage design and building companies, to help design and build the storage facility.

Gilbert explained that the storage facility had to be engineered and built to the most recent building and safety codes. He then credited Roof and Rack's engineers with designing a building that would maximize the use of the existing space, building racks for housing boats and trailers on top of the RVs parked on the ground floor. Moreover, high-quality management techniques had to be put in place to ensure customer satisfaction.

Because Gold Key Boathouse would be the first of what its investors hoped would be many storage facilities, it had to be done right. The goal of inland or remote dry storage is not only to serve boaters, but also to remove the hassles from boating by offering various valet service options.

In practice, Gold Key customers need to call ahead to the dry storage facility for boat pickup. When they arrive, they find their boats and trailers parked by the exit. For an additional fee, the facility

will stock the boat with food and drinks, while making sure the gas tank is full.

When the boater returns to the storage facility, he simply parks the boat and trailer. The facility will clean the boat and for additional fees, maintain and detail it. It will then hoist the boat to its rack location inside a climate-controlled facility. Studies have shown that if a boat is stored in a climate-controlled facility, it will last anywhere from five to seven years

longer than if stored on the water.

Reality

At Gold Key Boathouse, Roof and Rack built 80,000 sq. ft. of storage space in multiple buildings for storing boats, trailers, and RVs. The key question here was whether there was a forklift that could lift both the trailer and boat and move it into a rack.

In order to stack both boat and trailer successfully, Gold Key needed the right

piece of equipment. It called on Mike Wiggins, the owner of Wiggins Lift Co. in Oxnard, Calif., to see what type of equipment he would recommend. Wiggins recommended that Gold Key use the Marina Bull™, with its forks and carriage custom-designed to efficiently handle both boat and trailer. This piece of equipment would allow Gold Key to safely stack boats and trailers up to six stories high.

In practice, Gold Key has a drop-off area for its customers to leave their boats and trailers. This acts as a staging area so the forklift operator can retrieve the boats and trailers in a timely manner. 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. The forklift then lifts the boat and trailer off the ramp and places in its designated rack, which is where it stays until its owner calls to have it retrieved. The unique design of the facility has sliding doors on both sides of the building that move as the forklift lifts boats to and from their racks.

If the owner needs to either pick up or drop off the boat after hours, Gold Key provides its customers with a secured keyless entry area.

In short, Gold Key Boathouse has 80,000 sq. ft. of boat storage and holds close to 500 boats and trailers, in addition to RVs. It is the answer to the question boaters in the area have been asking: If boaters can't store their boats on their property or on their streets, where can they store their boats that would be both affordable and secure?

An added benefit

Although the developers of Gold Key Boathouse see it as a way of relieving crowded conditions for boat owners waiting for wet and dry slips, remote or inland dry storage can possibly be a big boost for boat dealers.

When a boater spends between \$15K to \$60K for a boat, he wants 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. Moreover, it may prompt many a boat dealer to invest in remote dry storage facilities. ⚓

New Indoor Boat & RV Storage System

by Mike Wiggins, Wiggins Lift

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.

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. (www.goldkeystorage.com)

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. They have already begun another nine-acre facility in Placerville, Calif.

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. They're new, eight acre facility in Placerville, Calif., is almost completed and they now own marina property in Florida.

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 (www.wigginslift.com). 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.

www.wigginslift.com