



# *van dam custom boats*

**A STORY OF DRIVE. OF PASSION. OF LEGACY. AND OF ONE-OF-A-KIND WATERCRAFT.**



When classic wooden boat designs are incorporated with highly evolved engineering, the finished product is strong, beautiful, and singular. Founder Steve Van Dam's dream of sailing to far off places began with a small wooden boat on Lake Macatawa, not far from his family home in Grand Rapids, MI. Motivated by self-reliance and a passion to learn, Van Dam complemented these qualities with a love of wood and water - shaping the undercurrents of what Old World masters term "a calling."

Learning from a master craftsman in Canada, Van Dam became skilled in wood boat building via new construction techniques and the use of modern adhesives. His lessons paid off as four years later, he returned to Michigan with his wife Jean to launch what is now known as Van Dam Custom Boats.

Van Dam completes one to three boats a year and each personifies the integrity of its craftsmen as well as the family name. "We make our own parts and pieces - everything from metal hardware to complex electrical systems," says Van Dam. And if you ask what his favorite parts of boat building are now, versus when he began in 1977, he will speak of instant communication with clients, digitally designing the boats and of course, the 'cool tools.' The Van Dam crew of 10 to 12 skilled boat builders utilize the finest materials and technology available to build their amazing watercraft.

When asked if he can pick a favorite Van Dam boat, Van Dam is quick with an analogy. "This is like asking who your favorite child is. I love all my children! And because we build only one of each custom design, there is no way to have a favorite model. Each is a favorite because of its own uniqueness. To choose one would mean slighting the others. It's impossible to do."

Van Dam builders employ a variety of wood species including various Mahoganies, Sitka Spruce, Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar, Alaskan Yellow Cedar and Teak. "We will use any species for interiors," noted Van Dam. "Every wood is used in a manner that best represents its strength or visual requirements and every boat is different in its requirements." The quality of the material and the workmanship creates a truly unique end product. "No man made products match the beauty and versatility of wood," he continued. "Wood is timeless and fluid."

VAN DAM CUSTOM BOATS | [VANDAMBOATS.COM](http://VANDAMBOATS.COM)





**VAN DAM DETAILS.** OPPOSITE PAGE: From Van Dam design principal, Michel Berryer, comes Don Don, boasting contemporary and exotic automotive styling. THIS PAGE. TOP: Reminiscent of 1920s commuters, Geronimo is a day cruiser with Van Dam's intricate styling. BOTTOM LEFT: The stainless exhaust of Alpha Z offers ground breaking mahogany curves like no other. BOTTOM RIGHT: The Gonzo sports a custom steering wheel, carbon fiber instrument panel and Van Dam machined stainless accents. Photos courtesy of Van Dam Custom Boats.

