



#### For immediate release

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### MISS GEICO GETS A NEW TAIL FROM LATHAM MARINE

“Seeing that boat fly down the Palm Beach Intracoastal Waterway was just amazing!” said Scott Colton, one of the Miss GEICO Racing team members who witnessed the official test of the 50’ Mystic with its new Latham Marine custom-made rudder. The boat, formerly powered with T55 turbine engines and Buzzi drives, was re-powered and rigged by AMF Offshore Racing’s team and team owner, John Haggin, who decided it was time to join the ranks of his fellow-racer, Dave Scott, who first had Latham build a customized rudder for his World Champion Budweiser 36 Skater.

Scott, a long-time Latham customer, went again to Bob Latham when he stepped up to the 46 Skater and eventually to the 50 Mystic. “The load put on a rudder at those speeds is spooky to comprehend!” says Scott, relating stories of previously installed drives with cast housings that simply broke under pressure. To adequately handle the horsepower that he was using in his race boat, he needed the best and knew that Latham Marine would deliver. “Bob never stops trying to improve what he has,” explained Scott, “We put our lives on the line and are grateful he took on the challenge—the drives are an investment in both performance and safety.”

Bob Latham, used to being challenged by championship racers and being one himself, went to the drawing board and created a new and stronger rudder. The materials had to be stronger to accommodate the size of the boat and its power, so he went to a special grade of stainless steel and invested in a plasma cutter which he describes as “liquid lightning” as it cuts flawlessly through the toughest of metals. The mountings for the rudder were also milled by his CNC machines, not cast, adding significant strength and integrity to the drives.

Months of engineering and labor were invested by Latham Marine to perfect the custom part, yet each new rudder and installation brings individual changes to make certain the system works with the boat’s hull, engines and propulsion. “With each boat, it is important to understand what the team is trying to accomplish and the racers’ preferences so we can come up with the right combination of equipment for them,” explains Latham.

As Miss GEICO made its power and rigging changes to the 10,000 pound boat with 6,000 HP, the team unanimously agreed on Latham Marine as *the* choice. “Every racer has his own way of setting up, and we knew Latham ‘gets’ that,” says Marc Granet, Miss GEICO’s driver, “In the Extreme Class boats, I need a rudder that gives me the feel of the water—the more I can *feel* the faster I am! I like to feel the tension—we don’t use power steering.”

The boat was clocked at 187 mph in its initial test and “was still accelerating” according to Colton—still far below the 200+ mph the team knows the boat can reach. Testing will continue with the newly rigged Miss GEICO set to debut at the SBI race in Michigan City, August 7-9. She will compete against Aquamania, another 50’ Mystic also with a Latham rudder and also JBS, another new Mystic, later in the season. “We use Latham rudders on all of our boats now,” says John Cosker, president of Mystic Powerboats, “The results prove it is the best rudder for the boat.”

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