

HOMEGROWN KENYA

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Bryan
Matiba



Meet Bryan Matiba, 23 years of age and a recent graduate in Naval Architecture from Southampton University, UK. Bryan, born and raised in Kenya, grew up on the coast and coming from a family of avid recreational fisherman, is no stranger to a life on the water. Bryan fondly recalls his adventures with his family, fishing along the coast. When asked why he chose the career path he did, he simply says that he always wanted his own boat and after spending such a large portion of his childhood on boats, he knew exactly how he would want it to be. As many determined and hardworking people before him, he knew what he wanted and set about getting there. Off he went to university to gain the necessary skills and knowledge. Bryan completed his degree, achieving a first class degree with honours. Within 2 days of graduating he was commissioned with his first project through Captain Andy's, a company which provides maritime based solutions and services. Bryan's first job was to design a centre console boat, which he successfully completed.

Bryan is rather unique when compared to other boat designers. This is because other boat designers often work as part of a design team. Designers are often tasked with designing one specific part of the boat, this is then passed on to someone else to produce. Upon completion of the whole boat, it has to be surveyed and signed off as 'sea worthy', the whole process requiring many individuals. Bryan can do all of this, from the designing through to the 'signing off'. However, Bryan points out that this is only for boats less than 24 metres in size. A year later, Bryan has completed his second big project, the B38 Leisure pontoon. For anyone unsure, a pontoon is a flat-bottomed boat used to support a temporary bridge or floating landing stage. Unlike other boats, a pontoon provides you with a working platform and for this reason has several uses, from fishing to a floating restaurant.

So what makes Bryan's pontoon so special. The B38 Leisure pontoon is incredibly unique and likely the only one of its design. Unlike other pontoons, it is completely customizable and can be packed and shipped anywhere in Africa. The pontoon, similar to your flat pack furniture, can be broken down and placed into a 40ft container and shipped to any destination. Upon arrival it can then be built and used. The design is very clever, the hulls are made from fibre glass, which can be mass produced and stored. The structure itself is made from aluminum, which is completely customizable, therefore can be designed the way the customer wants it. Both the design and the materials used, significantly reduces the whole processing time, making it a very easy product to produce.

The whole project took one year and was done in partnership with Captain Andy's. Captain Andy's originally approached Bryan about the pontoon after receiving several enquiries for custom made pontoons. However, as this had never been done before, potential customers were reluctant to commit. So it was decided to go ahead and build a 'demo' pontoon. After several visits and meetings between Captain Andy's and Bryan, they came up with a design and in September 2018 they began production. Within 3 months the pontoon had been built and was officially launched on the 30th November, as a floating bar for prospective customers.

What makes this project even more unique, is the fact that it is the first boat of its kind made in Kenya by a Kenyan. Furthermore, if you want a custom made small boat for recreational purposes, you will need to travel to somewhere like the USA to get your boat designed to your liking. This would then need to be shipped back to Kenya, which is neither a cheap or quick endeavour.

Since the launch of the B38 Leisure pontoon, Captain Andy's has received many enquires and Bryan anticipates a further 3-5 pontoons will be completed by the end of the year. The design has many potential applications, varying from medical, oil and gas, transport and education. Its commercial potential will also help create jobs and opportunities for education and healthcare.

So why is no one doing what Captain Andy's or Bryan are doing? Well as Bryan explains that although boats bigger than 24 metres are often designed and produced in Kenya, anything smaller is just simply not done. He goes on to explain that the only company that can design a small customized boat and also manufacture it is Captain Andy's.

So what are Bryan's future plans, well he is finally getting the chance to design his very own boat but he would like to eventually have his own design studio. However, Bryan at present is enjoying working with Captain Andy's and looks forward to building more custom boats in Kenya. Check out Captain Andy's website for more information; <http://www.captainandyskenya.com>.

