



Media Release
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To Russia with love

When Pacific Network went looking for a vessel tough enough to navigate Russia's Bering Sea, yet small enough to use as a tender boat – their search took them to the other side of the world.

In March company scout Sergey Frolov arrived in Tauranga to take delivery of a Stabicraft 589 Super Cab before shipping it to his home port in Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula.

"I heard it is the best one. I am driving Zodiacs quite a lot. I was looking for something very stable which can go through all conditions and this looks like a good one," Mr Frolov said.

"I have been a couple of time to New Zealand but I never paid any attention then I saw this boat at an expo in Seattle two months ago (January 2009) – it was perfect and small enough to fit into a container."

Shipping companies have long plied sub-antarctic waters in the summer months with their special blend of eco-tourism but were now finding more and more fertile grounds in the Northern hemisphere along Russia's Eastern coastline, all 14,484km of it.

The coast – a militarised zone that has only recently been opened to tourism and cruise boats – had a wealth of natural history akin to New Zealand's Enderby Islands, Mr Frolov said.

While there were no penguins in the Northern Hemisphere, there were plenty of nature reserves with furs seals, birds, walrus, beers – so many in fact all the areas of interest were yet to be mapped, he said.

That's why it's becoming a cruise mecca for everything from giant 1000 passenger liners to the smaller 100 passenger eco-trips. Mr Frolov's company, Pacific Network provides logistical expertise for 30 tourism companies who are now operating in Eastern Russian.

The Stabicraft 589 will be an eco-scout boat used to search out new locations for landings and up-close encounters.

"We need to cover huge distances. We are looking for suitable landing spaces. It's small enough to travel to lagoons and up rivers," Mr Frolov said.

The matt black 589 Super Cab is powered with a 115HP Yamaha and due to start work in its home waters from May 6.

Power Boat Services owner Stu Miller said when first got an email from Russia about buying a boat he thought someone was pulling his leg.

That inquiry was followed by a call to cellphone from a "very odd" number which got cut off. Sergey Frolov then rang his landline.

It's the furthest Miller's Tauranga dealership has sent a boat, although he did sell a 589 to a New Zealander in November who works on an oil rig in Russia.

"He spends 28 days in Russia and 28 days in New Zealand so I suppose you could say that was half-Russian," Mr Miller said.

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For further information, please contact:

Stu Miller
Power Boat Services Tauranga
(07) 575 0872
027 285 9091

Paul Adams
Stabicraft Marine
(03) 211 1828 Ext 6

Sergey Frolov
E: mail@sfrolov.com