

QUE MAS

Wally and Sue Whitley, owners of *Que Mas*, a 70' American Custom won the prestigious Bermuda Triple Crown Billfish Championship in 2008.

Who are they and where did they come from leading up to this huge accomplishment? A long time avid fisherman, Wally got hooked on billfish back in the late 80's when he and a buddy entered the Islamorada Sailfish Tournaments, winning the tournament 4 times. They also received the top angler award twice. "This experience wet my appetite for tournaments." Judging by 2008, he clearly never looked back! Their two sons share their love of fishing, as do their 6 grandchildren.

Their first boat was a Donzi 54 purchased in 1994. She was the original *Que Mas*. Now with the new *Que Mas* and retirement as CEO in the financial sector, they were committed to chasing billfish while honing their skills and experience in preparation for future tournaments. During the Triple Crown of 2007, *Que Mas* made an impressive second place. Wally puts this year's win largely down to the few months that the team spent fishing blues and blacks off Costa Rica and Panama. They did a ton of marlin fishing and honed their technical and team skills. Result: a well-oiled fishing machine!

2008 Tournament Wins Overall

- Custom Boat Shoot Out
- Bermuda Big Game Classic
- Bermuda Triple Crown
- Manufactures cup
- MTU Legend Series
- World Sailfish Championship: Charity Division

2008 2nd Place and 3rd Place Finishes

- Bermuda Billfish Blast, 2nd Place
- World Blue Marlin Championship, 2nd Place

When asked about the future, so far in 2008 *Que Mas* has fished 6 tournaments with a possible 6 more by the end of this year. For 2009, they are definitely back to Bermuda (a favorite of Wally's), the Boy Scout Tournament (Virgin Islands) and pretty much anywhere that there's marlin and sailfish to be had.

Captain Travis Butters, born in the Florida Keys, has been with Wally and Sue for 14 years starting as a mate on the *Donzi 54*. Although he has fished extensively in many areas, the Florida Keys remain top of the list with Bermuda a favorite second. When asked about his favorite species of fish, "Being a commercial fisherman for a few years, there's nothing better than a great yellowtail snapper bite where you are dipping them as fast as you can go. I pretty much like to catch anything that is biting. Sails, blues even a good blackfin tuna bite is hard to beat (live baiting)!" Although he has a favorite lure, Big T Leopard (single hook 10 or 11/0), Travis is not a fan of plastic in general, swimming baits are where it's at for him. When it comes to teasers he prefers a squid chain. As for tournaments, "I like them all and the fun of hanging out with the buddies you make over the years. Having commercial fished in the Keys for a few years, the World Sailfish Championship in Key West is probably my favorite, always great to go back."

Besides fishing his other interests include, "Hunting and spending time with my family. Although since we built *Que Mas*, there hasn't been a lot of time for that." Others in the team describe Travis as, well, just fishy. He has an uncanny knack for knowing where the fish are!

Brian Komer, the first mate started fishing in the Keys when he was 3 years old and won his first tournament when he was 8 years old. He feels he was born to fish. He has an Associates Degree in Marine Science, a 6 Pack License and is from Palm Beach, Florida. After fishing on other notable tournament winning charter boats, he joined *Que Mas* in October 2007 as a well-seasoned first mate. His passion is teaser fishing, "There's just nothing like the thrill of teasing a fish in."



Left to right: Wally Whitley, Brian Komer, Captain Travis Butters, Nick C., Sue Whitley, and Robert Helms.

When asked what of the most prized moments for him personally in 2008, he said, "Every tournament has a special meaning. For instance the Sailfish Cup was special as it was the first time that he fished with Wally and Travis. Also, the World Sailfish Championship in Key West, where they were fourth overall, held sweet memories as it took him back to Key West where he first learned to fish. "Every day on the boat and in tournaments something happens to open your eyes and you learn something. When you stop learning, it's time to quit."

Growing up in Homestead, Florida, Robert Helms, second mate, can't remember a time that he didn't fish. First, it was with his dad, then working weekends and school breaks in the Keys as a deckhand on a variety of boats. He graduated FTCU (Fort Myers) with a Marketing/ Business Degree, mostly financed by his fishing sideline. With a love of travel and outdoor adventure, the sideline naturally became the main line. Captain Travis Butters gave Robert a chance to live his passion. He joined the *Que Mas* Team early December 2007 and wow, what a year so far! His most exciting moment this year was at the World Cup Tournament (Bermuda) when they hooked up and boated the 718 lb blue, "Everything worked like clockwork as Wally reeled in the monster! What a rush!"

When asked what it takes to be given the opportunity to join a team like *Que Mas*, Robert said, "Don't stand back! Get involved, carry the cooler, always be there ready to help, be prepared to do anything, and do more than you have to. That's how you get noticed. Once you get that job, keep doing more than expected: Work hard and smart."