

# MEMBER PROFILE



BY SUZANNE HAWLEY

## The 'New' Maretron

Raising the bar on innovation, products and support

*It's been a decade and a half since MEJ sat down with Maretron to put together a member profile of the new company. A lot has changed since then. After the recent consolidation of Maretron into the family of Carling Technologies, we wanted to check in with the key players responsible for the brand's new direction and see what the move means for boat builders, dealers, installers and boaters worldwide.*

**M**aretron has earned a reputation as the company that pioneered 'plug and play' network solutions, along with development of a backbone designed to harness the power of the NMEA 2000® marine networking standard. Established in 2003, Maretron's vision and mission have been to design and manufacture a broad array of NMEA 2000 products that simplify vessel monitoring and control. Despite an initially reluctant marketplace, Maretron's technology and products have made the brand a household name in the marine industry.

In February 2019, Maretron, Inc. was merged into parent company Carling Technologies, Inc., and its product line continued as a brand of Carling Technologies. The base of operations for the Maretron brand relocated from Phoenix, AZ, to a Carling facility in Jupiter, FL. Key Maretron employees like co-founder/Vice President Frank Emmett and Sales Director Kip Wasilewski transitioned with the brand to the new location. Rick Sorenson, Jr., Vice President of Carling Technologies, is responsible for Maretron-branded vessel monitoring and control products. He's also leading the effort to build the brand and develop new products.

Carling Technologies has built a reputation as a go-to supplier of switches and circuit breakers in the marine market over the past 30-plus years, driven by a passion for boating by the company's



*At top is Carling Technologies' headquarters in Plainville, CT. Inset photo shows a Maretron testing, simulation and training lab in Jupiter, FL, where Maretron was relocated from Arizona. Equipment includes OctoPlex, MPower and Maretron devices. At left are various Maretron displays and other electronics installed at the Jupiter facility to assist when talking to customers.*

3rd and 4th generation management team. CEO & President Richard Sorenson, Sr., known in the marine and other industries as Rick, is a serious boater—he owns a 120-foot Hargrave Tri-deck motoryacht, the *Sandrine*. He also was responsible for developing the OctoPlex vessel monitoring and control system. Sorenson, along with his three children and Carling's 2,800 employees worldwide, provide Maretron's product lineup with the infrastructure it needs now that NMEA 2000 is embedded in the digital switching and monitoring market. Carling is dedicating significant resources to build and assure the continuing success of the Maretron brand. This includes a focus on technology and customer service to support the continued development of leading-edge products and solutions.

The marine business has always been a core focus for Carling Technologies, with a directive to consistently bring innovative switching solutions to market. By drawing upon Carling's nearly 100 years of design and manufacturing experience, the consolidation strengthens the Maretron brand, which is synonymous with high-quality marine vessel monitoring and control solutions. "With the consolidation of Maretron into the Carling family, we bring a vast array of talent and resources on a global level to help enable aggressive expansion and support to the Maretron brand," said the younger Sorenson.

"By integrating with Carling, our ability to deliver world-class products to OEMs, dealers, and end users is enhanced," said Maretron Sales Director Kip Wasilewski. "Carling provides us with first-class engineering resources and expands our product portfolio to include digital switching and enhanced vessel control functions. In addition, Carling's vast experience in the transportation industry will positively impact our strategy to bring core technology to the marine market."

### Powerful combination

When asked about significant changes in the company's strategies and products, Sorenson Jr. was enthusiastic about the alignment of the two brands. "Our strategy moving forward is simple . . . deliver exceptional support, constantly innovate, challenge ourselves to always do better and expand our marine market platform of products to be the foremost provider of switching, monitoring and control products



*The Carling Maretron team at METS (r-l): Rick Sorenson, Sr., President/CEO; Phil Lee, Field Applications Engineer; Frank Emmett, VP Software, Monitoring & Control; Callum Eastwood, Product Specialist; Kip Wasilewski, Director of Sales; Scott Johnson, Director-Sales, Marine Electronics; Andrew Liddle, Sales Director, EMEA; Ben Jones, Senior Product Specialist; Rick Sorenson, Jr., VP Carling Technologies.*

to the marine market." By pairing Carling's core competency in AC/DC power, switching, and multiplexing technologies with Maretron's expansive user-friendly suite of products, the company aims to be the market leader in vessel monitoring and control.

Carling Technologies will expand on Maretron's loyal customer base by utilizing its global base of operations, engineering support and marine sales experience. The synergies between the two companies run deep and the new leadership is dedicated to an aggressive path of innovation in the marketplace by delivering on quality and performance of product with unrivaled support in the field.

Asked if the market for NMEA 2000 products is living up to the promise of 15 years ago, Wasilewski said, "In my view, the market's adoption of NMEA 2000 took much longer than Maretron anticipated. That said, NMEA 2000 has really hit its stride over the last eight years. We now have all major electronics manufacturers offering NMEA 2000 connectivity as standard on their products. Most have moved away from traditional serial interface protocols. We have seen boatbuilders really start to recognize the benefits of NMEA 2000, offering the ability to have all

onboard systems from engines to navigation systems communicate."

He added that, "We have also seen explosive growth in multiplexed power distribution or 'digital switching.' In 2020, Maretron will offer a suite of Maretron Power digital switching products that we believe will be very attractive to both the industry as well as end users. The MPower portfolio will use familiar programming tools designed to make integration on the NMEA 2000 network greatly simplified."

### Benefits of digital switching

Digital switching brings all of the power and convenience of advanced home automation to your boat. One of the hottest trends in the boating world, digital switching is typically associated with larger yachts, but thanks to Maretron and other brands, the technology is rapidly finding its way aboard smaller vessels.

Digital switching is a networked control and monitoring system that replaces conventional DC mechanical circuit breakers and switches with a digital power distribution/switching system operating on a NMEA 2000 network. This system not only offers convenience and ease-of-use, it also delivers on the

promise of seamless, reliable operation as well as simple and cost-effective installation.

Unlike mechanical circuit breakers and switches, digital systems are programmable. This means users can control onboard electrical and electronic systems (lighting, security and entertainment systems, bilge pumps, etc.) from any point in the NMEA network utilizing a network-connected multifunction display, smartphone or tablet. From planning a single project to rewiring an entire boat, digital switching makes the job easier. Couple digital switching with Wi-Fi, cellular or satellite communications (depending on the system), and you can control equipment remotely.

### **System solution**

With the integration of Maretron, Carling Technologies is now able to offer a compre-

hensive lineup of products to enable full functionality of all control and monitoring on any size vessel. Celebrating 100 years as a premier provider of switch solutions across a variety of industries worldwide, the company is building on its switching expertise to offer what it says is the marine industry's best-in-class digital switching systems with the new MPower suite of products. They plan to continue to expand vessel monitoring and control through new product introductions, constant improvements and upgrades of current products and software.

Garmin announced recently that Maretron has been added to its roster of OneHelm integrators. An HTML5 platform, OneHelm is an intuitive solution that simplifies the process of controlling onboard systems via a Garmin multifunction display. It also eliminates the

need for multiple control displays and devices. Maretron anticipates similar integration with other MFD manufacturers.

The future of vessel monitoring and control is to make boating easier and more intuitive to the end user while also making equipment installation more cost effective and less time consuming. "We have a bright future ahead with many resources aligned on making Maretron the pre-eminent switch, monitoring and control product provider," said Sorenson, Jr. **MEJ**

### **About the author**

*Suzanne Hawley is an independent marketing consultant specializing in marine public relations and advertising.*