

The Virgin Islands Consortium

New Ferryboat Ready To Set Sail Between St. Croix And St. Thomas Mid-June

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ST. CROIX -- While covering the [grand opening](#) of the slot machine casino at Caravelle Hotel in downtown Christiansted last month, Senate President Neville James spoke to The Consortium at length about some developments he believed would boost St. Croix's economy.

One of initiatives was the ferryboat business between St. Croix and St. Thomas, reminding this publication that he'd established legislation that called for financing [to restart what was once a thriving business in the territory](#), to help re-link St. Croix and St. Thomas and spur more inter-island commerce. Mr. James said the monies had been secured, and there were ongoing talks to procure a ferryboat that could seat hundreds of

passengers. But that process will take sometime, though Mr. James is expecting it before the end of the year. In the present tense, however, there's a ferryboat from a local businessman that's almost ready to go, and will be in operation side-by-side -- albeit earlier -- with the bigger boat.

For now, Warren Mosler, a well-known businessman from St. Croix, who ran for public office seeking the Delegate to Congress seat at least three times, is calling his ferryboat the QE4. Receiving its finishing touches at [Gold Coast Yachts](#) located at the Salt River Marina, the ferryboat's design, a concept thought up by Mr. Mosler himself, will immediately catch your attention. *[It looks exotic.](#)*

"Mr. Mosler invented the concept, and then we've had help trying to engineer it. We're putting windows and doors in now, and we're getting ready to paint the bottom and put rubber rails on, and then launch the thing," said Gold Coast Yachts President Richard Difede, adding that, "it's definitely unusual."

The ferryboat could hold up to 90 passengers, but Mr. Mosler told The Consortium this afternoon that the plan was to allow for 52 seats inside, with a few seats outside and a bit of standing room outside as well. The boat will ferry passengers between the islands in 1.5 to 2 hours, traveling at 22 knots per hour, and burning a remarkable 18 gallons of



Inside the QE4, currently under construction

at Gold Coast Yachts, located at the Salt River Marina. (Ernice Gilbert, VIC).

"Any other ferry would burn 180 to 280 gallons of diesel per hour," said Mr. Difede. "And that's Warren's point, you can use technology and not money to subsidize going back and forth."

The ferryboat is a concept that Mr. Mosler himself is excited to see work. Mr. Difede called it a "crazy but cool" concept, and credited Mr. Mosler's love for the Virgin Islands that would cause him to expend near \$2 million to build the QE4 in an attempt to facilitate cheaper travel between the islands.

"I'm anxious to see if it works," Mr. Mosler said when asked about finally seeing his vision come to fruition. Mr. Difede said there's strong confidence that the idea will not only work, but thrive, because they've tested a trial boat that Mr. Mosler has used for the past two years, stating that the results were extremely positive.

"We were very impressed and we think he's done a great job. We were skeptical at first, but after riding the trial boat, it was pretty impressive and a lot of engineering has gone into this

boat. And I think people are going to be really surprised," Mr. Difede said.

One-way tickets will cost \$50, according to Mr. Mosler. The cheap rate will be welcomed news to residents who have complained that air travel through Seaborne Airlines, Cape Air and other local carriers, have been too expensive. The ferry travel may also cause rates to drop across the board.

A test run will take place at the end of May, and Mr. Difede said that by mid-June -- after a test with Coast Guard to receive a certificate of inspection -- the boat is expected to be ready for commercial use.

For Gold Coast Yachts, Mr. Mosler's boat was yet another major project in the firm's history of building a host of designs. They've been building yachts here for 31 years, with the QE4 being boat number 170. The company has built three boats that are on this island, fourteen in St. Thomas, four in St. John and all through the Caribbean, the mainland U.S. and Hawaii.

Feature Image: Warren Mosler's QE4 Ferryboat, currently receiving finishing touches at Gold Coast Yachts, located at the Salt River Marina.

Image Credit: VIC.