

Rock County Jet Ski does it all for personal watercraft

By Jack McLaughlin
Special to the Lakes Edition

Although John Zigler is something of a household name in the world of personal watercraft repair and customization, don't let these accolades fool you: he's also one of the most approachable wave runner and Jet Ski professionals you'll ever meet.

Having owned the iconic Janesville-area business (which took home the "Best Water Business - Retail" award in the 2018 Best of Kosh contest) since 1995, and boasting a history in watercraft customization dating back to the 1980s, Zigler couples the rare talent to create and streamline machines at the absolute top-end of the sport with the sheer amount of know-how needed to provide excellent day-to-day service for the more casual personal watercraft owner.

In fact, the vast majority of work done in Rock County Jet Ski (RCJS) is on the more common, and casual sit-down watercraft, usually referred to as a wave runner. "Sit-downs, those are our bread and butter," Zigler said. "They're probably around 95 percent of our business." Work on these machines includes everything from regular maintenance, such as oil changes, tune-ups, and winterizing, to full-scale customization.

"We offer everything," said Zigler. "That includes

maintenance, tune-ups, winterizing, plus work on engines and drive-lines."

New to the fold this year is a vehicle diagnostic interface system, the perfect maintenance tool. Similar to the technology used by car mechanics, the system allows Zigler to plug directly into a given watercraft and then, through system codes, is told exactly what issues need to be dealt with, saving time and money for everyone.

And more than just quality of work, Zigler — who has the uncanny ability to make you feel as if no question is too basic, while being able to answer the most complex inquiries at the same time — due to the personalized nature of business, is able to offer a level of hands-on customer service rarely seen in any field today.

"I'm the guy who does it all. I answer the phones, speak to you in person, work personally on your machine; I even maintain the building and mow the lawn myself. I'm not just some name you see on a sign," he said.

Epitomizing this sentiment is an anecdote from earlier this spring, where a customer from Cincinnati (it's not uncommon for RCJS to draw in customers from throughout the Midwest, including regulars from Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota, outside of many locals, due to the shop's sterling reputation) who had hired

Zigler last winter to oversee a large customization of his wave runner, where a larger, newer engine was installed in the frame of a 1992 Kawasaki 550.

This customer, in mid-May, anticipated the work so much that he flew the nearly 500 miles from southern Ohio to Janesville in order to water test his new toy with the man who had made it all possible. Zigler, instead of simply showing him to Lake Koshkonong, actually spent the majority of that Wednesday afternoon on the water, personally checking for signs that everything on his custom job was in order. How's that for customer service?

"We strive hard to give you all the attention when we can," Zigler said.

And while most of us ride a standard, sit-down wave runner, RCJS, keeping in line with its name, also services the more complex jet ski both in upkeep and full-throttle customization.

For clarification, the two varieties of personal watercraft Zigler works on include the sit-down (referred to as a wave runner), an easy to ride machine that most of us are familiar with, and the stand-up (colloquially called the Jet Ski, although both of these terms are brand designations and aren't technically accurate), which uses a set of raised handlebars for steering. Jet Skis take a good amount of athletic



Owner John Zigler stands next to one of his most recent custom projects at Rock County Jet Ski in Janesville. (Photo submitted by Jack McLaughlin)

ability and acquired balance, and aren't generally used by beginners.

And many of his riders aren't beginners. In fact, Zigler and Rock County Jet Ski sponsor a handful of professional watersport athletes both at the local and national level. For many of them, peak performance requires a top-tier machine, which often means customization work, an area Zigler is renowned in. This type of

work includes anything and everything that will make a wave runner or jet ski perform at the absolute best it can, be it by splicing a larger engine into a different model, adjusting handlebars, tweaking acceleration: the list is infinite.

For these jobs, Zigler actually owns and operates his very own line of customer parts, Watcon.com. "We have tools, steering systems, controls, drive-line components — you

name it," he said.

RCJS offers customization in both jet skis and wave runners as well. While we conversed, the Janesville watersport go-to guy showed me a fully embellished wave runner undergoing custom work — using specialized software, Zigler can go into the machine's CPU and override its max speed and horsepower restrictions, making it much faster and equally as powerful.

Roofing • Siding • Insulation • Gutters

ADAMS & SONS, LTD

Family owned and operated Since 1941

• Shingles • Flat (Rubber) • Residential • Commercial

Call Toll Free 1-800-887-3385 • 26 S. Arch St. • Janesville, WI 53548

Local - 608-754-3385

RCJS

ROCK COUNTY JETSKI 608-743-1305

Watcon
.com

Rock County Jet Ski is a full, personal water craft service salvage shop in Wisconsin. We offer full service on Kawasaki, Yamaha, Sea Doo, Honda, and Polaris PWC machines.

24+ yrs experience.

We sell both NEW and Used PWC parts.

Both aftermarket and original equipment available.

We can order OE parts from

Yamaha, Kawasaki, Sea Doo, and some from Polaris.

RCJS

211 Glen Street
Janesville, WI
53545

YAMAHA

POLARIS

Kawasaki

SEA DOO

www.watcon.com • email: watcon@watcon.com