

This Floating Tiki Bar From Cruisin' Tikis Has Been Boating Down Fort Lauderdale's New River

by [Lyssa Goldberg](#) Mar 18, 2016 01:09 PM



Amid the usual Water Taxis, speedboats and handful of yachts, lately a motorized tiki hut has been cruising down the New River.

Since February, Fort Lauderdale local Greg Darby has been taking his [Cruisin' Tiki](#), which he calls a cross between a dinghy and a tiki bar, out on the water. He'll kick back and relax on deck with a beer in hand, as he heads to favorite haunts like The Downtowner or Southport Raw Bar.

But truthfully, when Darby is out on his floating tiki bar, he says he's not in a hurry to get anywhere.

"You're actually on the destination," he said.

The vessel, equipped with stools and a circular bar top—even a fridge, wet bar and LED lights—is a prototype for the model Darby invented himself, which he'll be selling around the country. (Three Cruisin' Tikis were already sold before his first boat was even in the water, according to Darby.)

"I wanted a place that I could sit in the afternoon when I came home, drink a beer, and chill out," he said.

Darby dreamt up the concept a couple of years ago and put his engineering background to good use. Now instead of retiring and sipping a beer on his tiki bar, he notes, he's out building and distributing boats.

The boats are customizable with either bar stools or picnic benches and are sold at two different price points: non-powered (\$16,500), which he calls a docksider, or motorized (\$21,500). The latter comes with a six-year warranty through Suzuki.

The tiki hut boats, which are Coast Guard compliant, according to Darby, can hold up to 2,000 pounds, and he's even taken his out to Port Everglades. Normally, his wife, Karen, and friends—or sometimes friendly strangers—accompany him out on the water.

"We've had 15 to 16 people here from The Downtowner on board," he said.

In fact, Darby's tiki hut boat, named the USS Swede for his friend who passed away recently in a motorcycle accident, was docked outside the historic saloon Thursday—and decked out in green decor for St. Patrick's Day.

Though the Cruisin' Tiki is not a public bar that sells drinks to boaters, Darby plans to offer day charters with captains for those who want to cruise around to restaurants and bars. He's considering dinner cruises as well.

Some have suggested he create a version with pedals, like the bar bikes that people ride around town, but Darby tells them the 30-horsepower motor will do everything for them.

"This tiki wasn't made for work," he said. "This is all about relaxing and kicking back and enjoying the river."

Darby is heading up to the [Palm Beach International Boat Show on his Cruisin' Tiki this weekend](#), taking what he estimates will be a 12- to 15-hour boat trip, depending on how many stops he makes along the way. It's guerilla marketing tactics like this, along with the power of social media, that have helped word spread so fast.

Here in Fort Lauderdale, locals can also look forward to seeing the Cruisin' Tikis make an appearance at WinterFest in December.