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## Bay to Bay thanks community for its success by giving back

By Mike Wilkinson  
Reporter

"We have been living and working here for a long time. The community is important to us and we want to help do good things for it."

That's how Tom Jacob describes his company's philosophy when it comes to giving back to others. Jacob owns and operates Bay to Bay, a boat club in Excelsior.

Bay to Bay has a long history of giving to numerous organizations and community activities.

"We have donated to everything from helping fund the Excelsior fireworks show on the Fourth of July to the annual holiday lights for downtown Excelsior," Jacob said. "We have supported local sports teams such as kids baseball and hockey and we provide water sports packages for local schools and churches."

Jacob and his company believe they have a lot to be thankful for in that the company has become established and successful and a good deal of that is due to the strong patronage from the people of the area.

A native of Minneapolis who today resides in Excelsior, Jacob has a grandfather who ran a "man n' pa" resort in northern Minnesota.

"It got in my blood," he said.

He went to the University of Montana and while there, stumbled across Flathead Lake which probably wasn't hard to do since it is the largest freshwater lake west of the Mississippi.

"It was a spectacular lake, but there were no boat rental operations," he recalled.

He saw an opportunity and in the mid-1980s started a boat rental operation.

"It was ahead of its time and really took off," he said. "There were a fair number of California and Canadian residents living there in the summer and they were a large part of our success."

Jacob yearned to get back to Minnesota, but not to walk away from boat rentals. So, he sold the Flathead Lake operation and in 2000 bought the Excel Boat Club on Lake Minnetonka and relaunched the boat rental business. The business operated in the same location on Tonka Bay and then decided to move into what was the old Caribbean Marina on Echo Bay.

"We felt that since we were making such a change, we would change the name as well and hence, Bay to Bay," Jacob said. "The name reflects that boaters on Minnetonka usually boat from bay to bay."

Bay to Bay offers a large array of boat types and sizes in its fleet of 20. They are designed to accommodate anywhere from eight to 16 people.

"We cater to people who enjoy being out on a boat, but don't have the time or inclination to actually own and maintain a boat of their own," he said.

The fleet includes custom-made pontoon boats of 30 feet in length that Jacob and his people design and make themselves to deck boats and open bow speed boats. The company has plenty of ancillary items such as water skis, tubes and wake boards.

"We provide what I like to think of as country club service," he said.

Patrons are welcomed as they drive in and the staff unloads their vehicles and items they want on the boat which are then quickly transferred on board.

"We also work with some local restaurants to do catering and we will provide a captain if the customer does not want to pilot the boat themselves," Jacob said.



Above, Bay to Bay Boat Club owner Tom Jacob at his Tonka Bay marina Friday, May 3. Bay to Bay offers annual boat club memberships and rents a separate fleet of 25 and 30-foot pontoon boats for half or full days. PHOTO: Mark Trockman

### Bay to Bay Boat Club

**Where:** 135 Lakeview Ave., Excelsior

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Bay to Bay has two other full-time employees besides Jacob and during the boating season hires 14 to 16 local high school and college students.

"We pride ourselves on our boats and our high-end service," Jacob added.

He also prides himself on what Bay to Bay does for the communities that have contributed so much to the company's success and growth.

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