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Kawasaki Celebrates 50 Years of Jet Ski® Watercraft Exhilaration

Foothill Ranch, CA – Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A. is honoring the golden anniversary of its iconic Jet Ski® personal watercraft (PWC) products with the 50 years of exhilaration celebration.

When the original Jet Ski watercraft debuted in 1973, it created a whole new lifestyle of having fun on the water. What began with a liquid-cooled 400cc two-stroke twin engine, pivoting handlepole system and ability to slice turns and skim over waves has evolved to a supercharged 1,498cc inline four-stroke marine engine. Despite the technological evolutions, the soul of a Jet Ski remains recreating the feeling of riding a motorcycle on the water.

“For 50 years, Kawasaki Jet Ski has been synonymous with Good Times on the water,” said Bob O’Brien, Director of Marketing. “As an early leader in the PWC category, Kawasaki and Jet Ski developed a fun-loving lifestyle centered around the exhilaration of combining speed with control.”

Bringing the stand-up Jet Ski watercraft to market in the early 1970s was among the first projects of the new Kawasaki R&D department in Southern California. After creating several prototypes, both flat-hull and V-hull stand-up models were launched on a trial basis. Kawasaki Motors Manufacturing Corp., U.S.A. in Lincoln, Nebraska later started full production of the Jet Ski watercraft in 1975.

Kawasaki continued to innovate in 1986 and introduced the first mass-produced “sit-down”: the Kawasaki X2. This two-passenger watercraft led the way for the Kawasaki Jet Ski® Ultra® and Jet Ski® STX® lineups of three-passenger runabouts. Development continued as Kawasaki engineers tweaked hull design and engine displacement to produce the greatest amount of smiles per gallon.

For the 2007 model year, Kawasaki introduced its first supercharged personal watercraft, the Jet Ski® Ultra® 250X. This Jet Ski was built with Kawasaki Ninja® heritage as the engine was derived from the 1498cc powerplant of the Ninja® ZX™-14.

In 2017, Kawasaki went back to its stand-up roots, introducing the Jet Ski® SX-R™, its first four-stroke stand-up Jet Ski, powered by the same naturally aspirated 1498cc engine used in its runabout models. The introduction of the Jet Ski SX-R continued to show Kawasaki’s dedication to the PWC category as they are continuously updating and innovating their full lineup of Jet Ski products, including class-leading Jet Ski® Ultra® 160 and Ultra® 310 models.

About Kawasaki

Kawasaki started full-scale production of motorcycles over a half century ago. The first Kawasaki motorcycle engine was designed based on technical know-how garnered from the development and production of aircraft engines, and Kawasaki’s entry into the motorcycle industry was driven by the company’s constant effort to develop new technologies. Numerous new Kawasaki models introduced over the years have helped shape the market, and in the process have created enduring legends based on their unique engineering, power, design and riding pleasure. In the future, Kawasaki Motors, Ltd. is committed to maintaining and furthering these strengths which will surely give birth to new legends.



Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A. markets and distributes Kawasaki motorcycles, ATVs, side x sides, and JET SKI® watercraft through a network of approximately 1,100 independent retailers, with close to an additional 7,700 retailers specializing in general purpose engines. Kawasaki and its affiliates employ nearly 3,100 people in the United States, with approximately 260 of them located at Kawasaki's Foothill Ranch, California headquarters.

Kawasaki's tagline, "Let the good times roll.®", is recognized worldwide. The Kawasaki brand is synonymous with powerful, stylish and category-leading vehicles. Information about Kawasaki's complete line of powersports products and Kawasaki affiliates can be found on the Internet at www.kawasaki.com.